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THE PRUSSIAN AND AMERICAN GENERAL STAFFS: AN ANALYSIS OF CROSS-CULTURAL
IMITATION, INNOVATION, AND ADAPTATION

CAPTAIN PETER JOHN SCHIFFERLE
HQDA, MILPERCEN (DAPC-OPP-E)
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332

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by

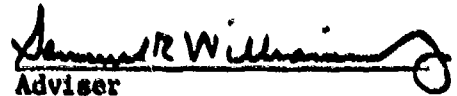
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Captain, United States Army

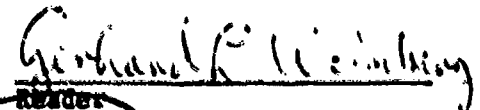
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PETER JOHN SCHIFFERLE. The Prussian and American General Staffs: An Analysis of Cross-cultural Imitation, Innovation, and Adaptation (Under the direction of Dr. SAMUEL R. WILLIAMSON, JR.)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On a bright, clear autumn day in 1904, a dedication ceremony took place in front of the nearly completed Army War College Building in Washington, D.C. At three o'clock in the afternoon of November 19, Lieutenant General von Loewenfeld, commander of the Prussian cadet school at Grosse Lichterfeld, presented a statue of Frederick the Great to President Theodore Roosevelt in recognition of the friendly reception accorded to Prince Henry of Prussia during his tour of America two years before, and in recognition of the lasting friendship between the German Empire and the United States. The German ambassador to the United States made a few remarks and "Die Wacht am Rhein" was played by the United States Marine Band.¹

The audience, which consisted of American cabinet officers, many congressmen, and most senior American army officers, listened as President Roosevelt delivered a longiloquent dedication speech. He said:

It is eminently fitting that the statue of this iron soldier, this born leader of men, should find a place in this War College for when soldierly genius and soldierly heroism reach the highest point of achievement the man in whom they are displayed becomes the example for all of the virile and masterful virtues. . . . I accept this statue as a symbol of the ties of friendship and good will which I trust as the years go on will bind ever closer together the American and German peoples.²

Roosevelt concluded his speech with another pledge of American-German friendship and then the American chief of staff, Lieutenant General

Adna R. Chaffee, addressed the assembled dignitaries. He informed the audience that upon completion of the War College Building, students would enter the building under the gaze of Frederick the Great and be "reminded of an extraordinary genius in their own chosen profession. The Science of War, as developed by him, will be studied and discussed, and his wonderful success in military art will furnish an incentive to work on their part."³ Chaffee then continued with an appeal to add statues of other war leaders to the entrance to the College. He specifically named Washington and Grant as figures who would "serve as indicators and point to sources of knowledge for the Army War College student."⁴

Chaffee's speech was followed by an address from the American ambassador to Germany and by a benediction given by a Washington Lutheran minister. The exercises were concluded by the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner" by the Marine Band. After the anthem, a retired captain of the Prussian Grenadier Regiment König Frederick the Great laid a wreath at the foot of the statue.⁵

The presence of a statue of Frederick the Great at the entrance to the United States Army War College in 1904 epitomizes the primary question of this thesis. Was the American general staff system, of which the War College was an integral part, the product of imitation or adaptation of the Prussian general staff, or was it an American innovation? The spectrum of cross-cultural influence has been analyzed by Allan Mitchell as comprising three distinct forms: manipulation (the deliberate coercion of one culture by another), competition (the struggle between two cultures for superiority), and imitation. Imitation, according to

Mitchell, is the acceptance by one culture of beneficial aspects from another culture. This is initiated when one culture faces a problem which has already been solved by another culture, and when the first culture has sufficient knowledge of the second culture's solution to the problem for this to serve as a model, or example, for their own solution.⁶ Ernest R. May cited imitation as a motive force in cultural and social systems before World War I; he believed that "international fashions in thought and events on the world scene could have had a decisive influence on the men of the establishment . . . above all the foreign scene provided models for imitation."⁷

For this study, both Mitchell's and May's ideas have merit, but a more precise definition of imitation and its characteristics is required for this analysis. Imitation takes place only when two cultures are confronted with, or think they are confronted with, analogous problems--otherwise the institution as model would have no relevance for the imitating society. The more similar the problems appear to be, the more likely it is that imitation will occur, for it is then expected that imitated institutions can solve the problem at hand. For example, the desires of Germany and Great Britain to control the North Sea, and the British development of the Dreadnought class of battleship in the early years of this century, resulted in the German imitation (and in some cases improvement upon) this type of warship. The distinctive features of imitation are a similarity in organization, structure, design, names, or processes beyond a similarity due to the need to perform analogous tasks. These characteristics and definitions are used in this thesis as criteria for the analysis of cross-cultural imitation.

One form of cultural alteration not discussed by Mitchell is

innovation, the creation of a unique solution to a cultural problem.

Innovation will occur when a culture is faced with a unique situation, or when knowledge of another culture's solution to an analogous problem is incomplete, and therefore cannot serve as a model for imitation.⁸

The American navy's use of shallow-draft armored river steamers during the American Civil War is an example. Faced with the unique challenge of an extensive inland waterway system over which the Union army had to conduct its Western campaigns, the navy converted river steamers into warships through the innovative use of add-on armor.

The third form of cross-cultural influence is a combination of imitation and innovation termed adaptation. Adaptation has the characteristic circumstances of imitation (the existence of a similar cultural problem) but it has the characteristic results of innovation (the formation of new solutions to sometimes unique problems). Adaptation usually begins as imitation and then gradually becomes an innovative alteration of the model institution -- the adaptation by the German army of the principle of the "tank" from the Allied armies, for example. The idea was borrowed from the opposing armies, but due to the limited development of manufacturing facilities in Germany, the end product was not an imitation of the French or British tanks.

To determine whether the American general staff began as imitation, innovation, or adaptation, we must first understand the model available to the American military reformers, in this case the Prussian general staff. The next chapter discusses the Prussian system's historical development, its mission, personnel, and organization. Particular attention is given to the selection, education, and training of general staff officers and to the organization and staff procedures of the

Prussian Grosser Generalstab. This second chapter also discusses the impact of the Prussian general staff on the French and British armies from 1371 to 1914.

The third chapter examines the Prussian influence on the American military from the end of the American Civil War to the eve of the Spanish-American War. The chapter also discusses the organization of the American army, and the need of the American army to look to Europe for reform models. The American observers of Europe, especially the military attachés and military educators, are studied. Additionally, the chapter analyzes the effect of Emory Upton and other reformers, and the effect of the modernization and reform of the American navy, on army reform. An interpretation of the progress of reform on the eve of 1898 concludes this chapter.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the creation of the first American general staff. This process, which began in the fiasco of mobilization for the Spanish-American War, culminated in 1903. This chapter studies the effects of the war on American desires for military reform, and the public criticisms of the army. Elihu Root's appointment as secretary of war in 1899, and his knowledge of the Prussian staff system, is analyzed. A discussion of Root's proposals for reform, and the opposition to his plans, concludes this chapter.

The fifth chapter is a comparative analysis of the American and Prussian general staff systems. The bulk of the analysis concerns personnel procurement, education, utilization, and training, and the organization of the staffs themselves. The chapter examines the American staff from 1903 through 1918, concluding with the Allied and Associated Powers' victory over the Central Powers. This chapter interprets the

functions of the American general staff, and the efforts of American officers to change these functions, while accounting for the available knowledge of the Prussian system, and the unique needs of the United States Army.

The final chapter summarizes the conclusions of the thesis. Proposals for further work on this topic are also considered.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Chief of Staff Adna R. Chaffee to Military Secretary Fred C. Ainsworth, December 9, 1904, pp. 2-3, 7-8, Document Nr. 475037, Adjutant General's Office Correspondence and Despatches. Old Military Records Division Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Adjutant General's Office Correspondence and Despatches hereafter cited as AGO Correspondence, RG, 94, NARC.)

2. Ibid., p. 9.

3. Ibid., p. 11.

4. Ibid., p. 12.

5. Ibid., p. 14.

6. Allan Mitchell, The German Influence in France after 1870: The Foundation of the French Republic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. xii.

7. Ernest R. May, American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay (New York: Atheneum Press, 1968), p. 228.

8. It is a primary contention of this thesis that leaders, both civil and military, when confronted with a new problem, would rather adapt an existing solution than develop an entirely new system.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRUSSIAN GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM

Modern military staff systems originated during the Seven Years War when Pierre Bourcet in France and Frederick the Great in Prussia both used groups of experts to solve planning and logistical problems. The French system did not survive the Revolution or Napoleon I. The Prussian system continued its development under Colonel von Massenbach until 1806, and under von Scharnhorst after Jena-Auerstadt. A central general staff was organized, based on the Prussian quartermaster-general staffs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under the control of the minister of war.¹ From 1806 to 1858, the Prussian central general staff slowly gained power and prestige; the chief of the general staff remained primarily an adviser to the minister of war until 1858.

The last half of the nineteenth century saw the development of large, centralized, and complex governments, an increase in both the size of armies and in the complexity of their weaponry and organization. These developments increased the need for military officers trained to meet the growing complexity, size, and technology of military organizations.² The Prussian general staff was the first military staff to meet these challenges.³ The appointment of Helmuth von Moltke as chief of staff in 1858 (he had been acting chief of staff since October 1857) marked the start of the system of staff officer selecting, education, and training which would become, as described by an anonymous English

observer, "one of the most monumental achievements of the nineteenth century."⁴ Moltke, who remained chief of staff until 1888, created the modern Prussian general staff. His emphasis on officer procurement, selection, education, and training made the Prussian system the most efficient in Europe. Moltke standardized the Prussian staff college (the Kriegsakademie) curriculum and he required all staff officers to serve as successful company and battalion commanders. He also formulated a system of education and instruction (the applied method) that became the standard throughout the Prussian army.⁵

Moltke's system remained virtually intact until the abolition of the general staff in the 1919 peace settlement. Changes were made in the power structure of the Prussian army; internally the general staff remained largely as Count Moltke created it. Moltke's conception of the mission of the general staff also stayed in effect.⁶ To quote Michael Howard, the Prussian staff worked by "applying to the conduct of war a continuous intelligent study, analyzing the past, appreciating the future, and providing the commanders in the field with an increasing supply of information and advice."⁷ The staff which performed this mission was part of the hybrid military system of the Second German Reich, a system which came into existence in 1871.

The formation of the German Reich enlarged the Prussian forces and made them the model for the few remaining independent German (non-Prussian) armies. According to the provisions of the 1871 Constitution, the Prussian king retained control of the Prussian army; the armies of Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg were controlled by their own state leadership. With the exception of the Württemberg army, which was eventually partially absorbed by the Prussian army (as the XIII Army

Corps of the Prussian-Württemberg Army), these armies remained legally independent until war came in 1914. This independence was primarily titular, because by 1914 Prussia had concluded agreements with the other German states which either placed their armies under Prussian control or under Prussian supervision; the Prussian king dominated the organization, training, and equipment of all German forces. Despite the particularist Bavarian, Saxon, and Württemberg wishes for independent forces, by early 1914 the Prussian military system practically controlled all German military forces.⁸

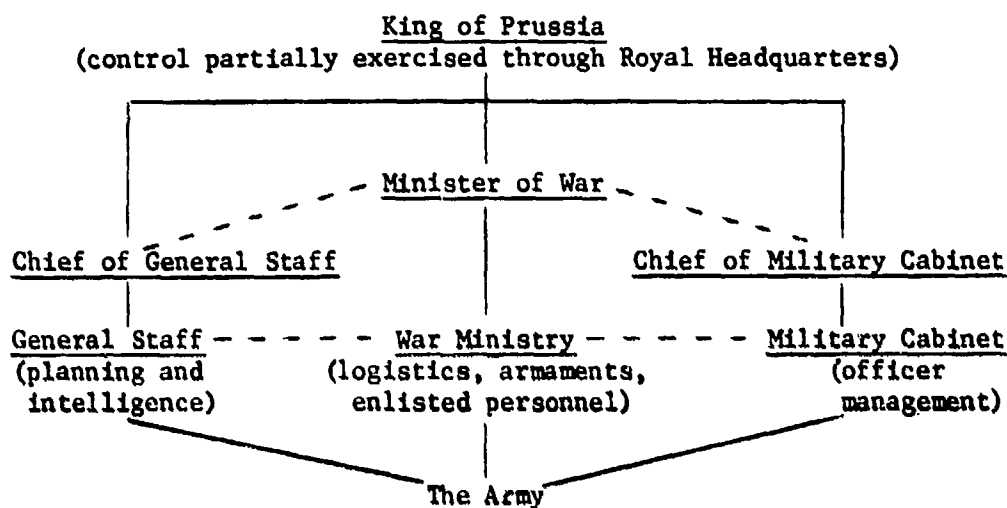
This domination and control extended to all areas of military interest in Germany, but it was particularly effective in the Prussian dominance of the German general staff systems. Only Bavaria retained a separate staff college after 1871; the other states were required to send their prospective staff officers to Berlin for training (and indoctrination in Prussian methods) at the Prussian staff college, the Kriegsakademie. When war broke out in the summer of 1914, it was a Prussian-trained staff corps which mobilized, deployed, and controlled the German land forces.⁹

In time of war, the German kaiser commanded all German forces; in peace he only commanded the Prussian army (as part of his duty as king of Prussia). The king of Prussia controlled his army as the personal holder of each officer's sworn fidelity, not as the leader of the Prussian people. Control of the Prussian military was a royal prerogative; little effective civilian control of the Prussian forces existed before 1918.¹⁰ The only influence the civilian world had on military affairs in the Second German Empire was through the individual state

legislatures' control over the military budgets, and the Reichstag's control over the financing of the "imperial" forces. Although there was "in a strictly legal sense . . . no imperial army," the Prussian war minister became the functioning imperial war minister of the German Empire.¹¹ After 1874, the Reichstag debated the army budget and army personnel requirements every seven years (eventually reduced to every five years). The Reichstag was the only civil body with any form of control over the "imperial" forces, and this control was tenuous at best.

Within the Prussian military structure, the king commanded the army through a complex and confused triad of agencies: the Prussian war ministry controlled the army's logistics, armaments, and troop personnel requirements; the military cabinet supervised all officer careers, made all officer assignments, and maintained all officer records; and the general staff performed all strategic and operational planning, supervised officer education, and, ostensibly, coordinated all activities between these agencies. This command structure has been justly condemned as both confusing and wasteful. Gerhard Ritter refers to these problems as the central "grave defects" of the Prussian military system.¹³ In this system, there was a constant struggle for control and domination, and after 1888 the new kaiser, Wilhelm II, did nothing to correct the situation. In 1899, he formed a royal headquarters, manned by the head of the military cabinet and by Wilhelm's coterie of military aides and personal friends. This headquarters (assigned the duty of transmitting the king's orders to the army, but actually serving no useful function) only increased the confusion. Part of this confusion was due to Wilhelm's reliance on his chosen officers to the exclusion of the various ministers of the Prussian and imperial governments, and to the exclusion of some

Table 1
Prussian Army Administration, 1890-1914¹⁴



of the army's most effective generals.¹⁵ The confusion was greatest whenever planning for the future was attempted. Although the general staff was held responsible for all strategic planning, the war ministry controlled weapons development and procurement and enlisted strength (through the legislatures), and the military cabinet controlled all officer assignments. This disunity of control made it difficult to coordinate any long-range plans.¹⁶ The general staff wrested some power from the war minister in the reorganization of 1888, as well as Immediat-vortrag (direct access to the king) for the chief of staff, but this did little to eliminate the "chaos which ruled at the top" of the Prussian army.¹⁷

This chaos had a particularly vital effect on the supply of arms, ammunition, food, and material to the forces in the field. This situation

would culminate in the disastrous shortages of equipment and personnel in the last months of 1914. This chaotic command and coordination situation, with no one except the king (and legally but impractically the chief of the general staff) responsible for effective coordination of activities, severely restricted the efficiency of the Prussian general staff and the Prussian military forces.¹⁸

Part of this limited effectiveness was the status of military-naval cooperation in the German Empire. The chief of the general staff and the chief of the naval staff had no established means of communication for the exchange of information. Each project which required cooperation between the services was dealt with on an ad hoc basis, with individual officers assigned from the Generalstab or Admiralstab as each project required. This case-by-case approach (which was also followed by most other nations at the time) was not efficient; when combined with the natural interservice rivalry for funds and prestige from 1897 to 1912, army-navy cooperation in the German Reich (as in most nations) was less a reality than a dream.¹⁹

The general staff itself was not immune to confusion or complexity, but it had a well-established and effective system of officer procurement, education, and utilization, and an effective organization. The efficiency of the Prussian general staff depended on the quality of its officers, and on the functional qualities of its organization.²⁰ The officers who worked in the general staff were members of a remarkably closed social class. Despite the efforts of Prussian military authorities to ensure the nobility of the Prussian officer corps, the general staff on the eve of World War I was composed of only slightly more than 55 percent noble officers. These efforts did manage to keep the general

ranks secure for the nobility: 80 percent of the generals assigned to the general staff on the eve of the war were noble. This analysis agrees with the study done by Daniel J. Hughes on the Prussian generals from 1871 to 1914.²¹ Noble domination of the Prussian officer corps, and of the officers assigned to the general staff occurred primarily through the ever-present example of senior (and noble) officers. The junior officers, eager to gain promotion and distinction, emulated these senior officers, and often their conservative ideas concerning the value of the Prussian nobility.²²

One of the most promising avenues for promotion and distinction for the junior officer was assignment as a general staff officer; the only practical route to such an assignment was through the Prussian staff college, the Kriegsakademie, an institution once described by an English observer as such a "beastly school" that "any man who has ever gone through that mill never looks happy again."²³ Despite the college's reputation as a harsh school, the two-year advance in promotion to captain awarded to a successful general staff officer (not to mention the five-year advance promotion to major) was sufficient incentive for many junior officers to attempt admission to the Kriegsakademie.²⁴ Another incentive was that duty at the college, located in Berlin, the cultural, military, and governmental center of Germany, was far more exciting than serving in the drab garrison towns where most line units were stationed.²⁵ In general, the completion of a tour at the staff college, as one 1908 graduate expressed it, was like saying "Sesam öffne dich" to a long and successful military career.²⁶

The Kriegsakademie, the primary Prussian officer postgraduate education institution, was designed to produce highly trained, efficient,

and mentally alert general staff officers through a long and tortuous selection process.²⁷ The first of several steps in this process was the completion of the entrance examination to the school. Officers of a minimum of five years' active duty, and with four years' remaining service as lieutenants, were permitted to take the exam. Multiple attempts to pass the test were permitted, and each officer was able to take the test two or three times, depending on the speed of his own promotions. Several hundred officers took the test each year; the average number for the years from 1889 through 1894 was 299.²⁸ Of these three hundred officers, only one hundred received orders to attend the school each year.²⁹

The test, offered in March at each army corps headquarters (there were seventeen active corps in the Prussian-Württemberg Army), was considered a "terrifically stiff examination" by one English observer.³⁰ Officers were required to present a board of examiners with a prepared essay on a published tactical problem, and they were required to pass a rigorous written test. This written test included, but was not limited to, formal and applied tactics, weapons knowledge, fortifications, terrain analysis, history, geography, French, and mathematics.³¹ Successful completion of all parts of the test was not specifically required; the candidate was obliged to demonstrate a suitable background education through his grasp of facts, and to show a sense of application and clear thinking.³² With only one of three applicants selected for the war college, competition was intense. Many officers found assistance from older officers, local professors, tutors, crammers, and a large body of literature on how to pass the test.³³ Once the test was over, the officer awaited the results for several months. If he was successful,

he was ordered to attend the Kriegsakademie starting in October.

The Berlin college provided both an educational and a cultural experience for its students. For example, when Wilhelm Groener, a Württemberg officer, arrived in Berlin in the fall of 1893 to attend the Kriegsakademie, he found life in the German capital stimulating and exciting. He developed new friendships, boarded with an upper-middle-class Berlin family, and generally acted the tourist for his first two years at the school.³⁴ But life at the staff college was not all culture and ease; students may have experienced plentiful free time in their first two years at the school, but there was useful work done in all three years at the college, and the last year was one of intensive study and work. Groener noted that he worked nearly continuously in his third year in Berlin.³⁵

Students at the Kriegsakademie were required to attend all the lectures in their programs; absences required prior approval. Students normally spent more than twenty-five hours per week in classes, with variations for their particular year and choice of minor programs. Officers could study a minor in either languages or applied science, a choice which they had to make before taking the entrance examination. From the information available, the curriculum changed little from the later years of Moltke's tenure as chief of staff (the 1880s through the early 1900s).³⁶

The staff college instructors used two distinct types of instruction. The general knowledge subjects (geography, history, the sciences, languages, and law) were taught by lectures; the military subjects were taught using Moltke's applied method. The lecture subjects, which concentrated on German physical geography, German constitutional and civil

Table 2
A Typical Three-Year Kriegsakademie Course³⁷

Subject	Hours per week per subject:		
	first year	second year	third year
Tactics	4	4	2
Military history	3	4	4
Weapons	3		
Fortifications	3		
Communications		2	
Surveying		2	
Military law		1	
Military hygiene		1	
Military geography		2	
General staff duties			4
Siege warfare			3
History (general)	3	3	3
Geography	2		
Civil law			2
Applied sciences	6	5	7
--or--			
French or Russian	6	6	6

law, modern European history, and on the basic applied sciences (or a foreign language), were often taught to classes of more than fifty students. Despite the limitations imposed by such large classes, and the school's emphasis on military education, the quality of the liberal arts and sciences education was enhanced by the presence of some of the most distinguished teachers in German scholarship.³⁸

The staff at the Kriegsakademie consisted of equal numbers of

civilian professors and military instructors. The civilians, twenty-two in 1905, were appointed by the minister of war with the approval of the chief of staff. They usually served at the staff college for the rest of their academic careers. Some of these professors were drawn from the faculty of the University of Berlin (which had been founded the same day as the staff college in October 1810).³⁹ Among the civilian instructors at the college in the years before the First World War were Heinrich von Treitschke the historian and Heinrich Schliemann the archaeologist (famous for his discovery of the ruins of Troy).⁴⁰ The military instructors, twenty-one in 1905, were part-time instructors assigned to the Kriegsakademie while serving with the general staff in Berlin. In addition, two advisory councils were formed of both civilian and military officials. The entire staff was controlled by the director of the war academy, a general officer, who insured that military instruction received sufficient emphasis.⁴¹

Military education occurred inside and outside the classrooms. In the summer months (the school term was from October through June), each officer served with a branch of service other than his own.⁴² Tours of arsenals and fortresses were also arranged by the faculty during the summer.⁴³ Most military education did take place in the classroom; it followed the ideas of applied method instruction formulated by Count Moltke.⁴⁴ This applied method, as described in the instructions for the college of 1888, was based on the student's participation in problem solving and tactical situations simulated in the classroom.⁴⁵ Practical problem solving, with the student role-playing as an officer in a particular situation, was used throughout the military classes at the Kriegsakademie, and later throughout the training conducted within the general staff.⁴⁶

Groener's class notes from his Kriegsakademie years show the influence of this practical education. His class notes are predominantly on military subjects, although some notes taken in classes on recent European history, German constitutional theory and civil law, and on German physical geography demonstrate the breadth of the curriculum at the college. Groener's notes, in particular his notes on military use of railroads, document the detail and practicality of the military education at the Kriegsakademie. His notes on military railroads include precise details on train design, loading ramp specifications, rolling-stock dimensions, and practical information on signals and communications used on European railways.⁴⁷

This practical education has been criticized for stifling original thought among students at the Prussian staff college, and among the entire Prussian general staff. This criticism first surfaced in the contemporary writings of General Friedrich Bernhardt. He called on the Kriegsakademie to progress beyond the merely practical to the theoretical ideas of science and politics. He desired a broad-based education instead of purely practical instruction.⁴⁸ Other writers also criticized this education and claimed that there was a decline in original thought among general staff officers due to the rigorous training methods employed at the college.⁴⁹ These criticisms have some validity, although the applied method did inspire rapid decision-making abilities and encouraged a sense of realism in the training among the student officers, as shown in the records of one of the applied method courses at the staff college, the practice staff ride.

Three weeks in June were devoted to this practice staff ride by the third (senior) class. This staff ride was conducted in the field,

usually along the German frontier with either France or Russia. It provided practical experience for the students in all of the duties of general staff officers in wartime. (These staff rides also introduced the young officers to a form of training used every year by the officers of the Prussian general staff. These annual Stab Reisen by the general staff were conducted under the direct control of the chief of staff and served to keep all staff officers in shape both physically and mentally.)⁵⁰

Groener's practice staff ride took place in the spring of 1896. He was part of a six-man team of students under the command of a general staff major. Groener's fifty-four-student section, half of the senior class, included Max Hoffman, of whom we shall hear more later.⁵¹ This practice staff ride included exercise in staff planning and execution, in tactics, in field sanitation, food resupply, logistical support requirements, and troop movements. This three-week-long period was also the final examination in the course on general staff duties, and it was the instructor's last chance to decide the future of each student officer.⁵²

Completion of the three years at the Kriegsakademie did not mean acceptance into the Prussian general staff. Aside from the chances of failure during the three years at school (approximately 5 percent of each class failed to complete the course), the graduates still had only a one-in-three chance of being named to the staff.⁵³ Four different certificates were granted upon completion of the course. The top 30 percent of each class were posted to the general staff as probationary officers; the rest of the class was certified as Adjutantur (those qualified only for battalion and regimental staff duty), as instructors at military schools, or they were sent back to their regiments certified

as "qualified for line duty."⁵⁴ The fate of the graduating class of 1891 is typical: of one hundred officers assigned as students, five were relieved due to incompetence, thirty-five were named to the general staff on probation, thirty-one were certified as Adjutantur, seven were qualified as military instructors, and twenty-two were returned to troop duty.⁵⁵

Those assigned to probationary duty on the general staff were not members of the general staff corps; they were not authorized to wear the triple carmine trouser stripe which was the distinctive uniform of the general staff. Probationary duty was actually a one-year-long step in the selection process for general staff officers.⁵⁶ During this year, the officers were assigned to particular sections of the central general staff in Berlin, and they worked in close association with veteran staff officers.⁵⁷ Their work was divided into two areas: daily work was done as required by the chief of their assigned section of the staff; each week and month the probationary officers also had to prepare solutions to problems proposed by the chief of staff.⁵⁸ If their work was satisfactory, and if their personal life style and financial security met the standards of the general staff, appointment to the general staff corps occurred. Only then, after a long period of study for the Kriegsakademie entrance examination, after three years at the staff college, and after one year of work at the "Red Den" (the general staff headquarters building in Berlin), was an officer accepted into the Prussian general staff.⁵⁹

Continued presence on the staff was possible, but not guaranteed. Every general staff officer, with the exception of from thirty to fifty auxiliary technical officers, was required to serve with both line and staff units in rotation.⁶⁰ After an initial period of one to three years at the "Red Den," the officers, now captains (having been promoted upon

acceptance into the general staff corps), would be ordered to duty as company commanders in their branch of service. If their two years as a company commander were successful, a return to the general staff was generally assured. Failure in command, or a financial or personal scandal, would result in loss of staff status. The process of command-staff-command rotation continued for the successful officer until he had commanded a regiment, after which he became eligible for promotion to general.⁶¹

The general staff officer could be employed on staff duty with either the central general staff in Berlin (the Grosser Generalstab) or as a staff officer with an army division or corps in the field or in garrison. Duty with line units was known as Truppen Generalstab service, and it accounted for half of all general staff positions in the Prussian army. Each army division had one general staff officer, usually as its operations officer (who was the principal staff officer in Prussian staffs which did not have a chief of staff). Each army corps had from three to five general staff officers assigned.⁶²

Groener's progress after the Kriegsakademie is typical of the successful officer in this system. He served his time as a probationary officer in the mapping section of the central general staff. He was then appointed a regular general staff officer, promoted to captain, and assigned to the survey section of the central general staff. He served in the survey section from March 1899 to October 1902, when he was ordered to Metz to command an infantry company. In October 1904, he moved back to Berlin and to duty with the railroad section of the staff. He was promoted to major, and he remained in Berlin until the fall of 1908. His next assignment was as chief of staff of the XIII Army Corps

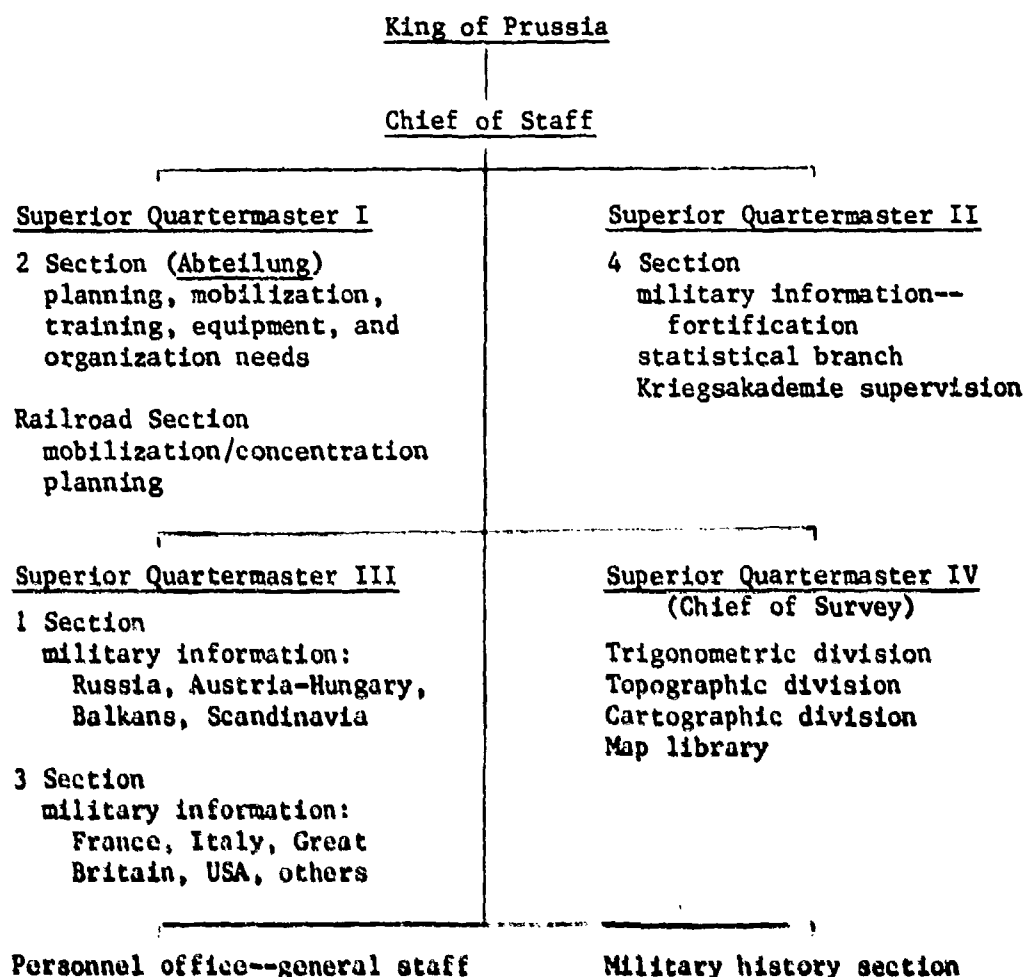
(the Württemberg corps in the Prussian/Württemberg Army). He then commanded an infantry battalion from October 1910 to September 1911. The next year found him in Berlin once more assigned to the railroad section of the general staff. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in October 1912, and he became chief of the railroad section.⁶³

The officers who served with the Grosser Generalstab in Berlin were under the direct control of the chief of the general staff. The chief of staff could alter his staff system and organization as he saw fit, tempered only by budget restrictions, but the system, like the curriculum at the Kriegsakademie, remained remarkably unchanged from the last years of the elder Moltke to the first days of World War I. Some alterations in the organization of the Grosser Generalstab did occur, but there were few substantive changes in the basic system, or in the mission of the staff.⁶⁴

The primary mission of the central general staff remained the "preparation of the Prussian army . . . for war, [and] the transport of troops during the mobilization of the army."⁶⁵ Secondary missions, all critical to the proper performance of the primary mission, included intelligence gathering and analysis, the education and training of general staff officers, the study of problems associated with new items of military technology, the arrangement of the annual maneuvers, and preparation of military histories.⁶⁶

These missions were accomplished within a system designed to be flexible, and capable of easy alteration by the chief of staff to facilitate the completion of assigned tasks. The chief of staff was assisted by a deputy chief of staff (Oberquartiermeister I) and three subordinate "superior quartermasters" (Oberquartiermeister II, III, and IV). Various

Table 3
Prussian Grosser Generalstab Organization, ca. 1890⁶⁷



sections of the central general staff were assigned to the direction and control of these four officers (see table 3 above).⁶⁸ In 1890, the deputy chief of staff controlled the section of the staff concerned with training, organization, and mobilization of the army, and also the railroad section. The other superior quartermasters controlled the remaining sections. One superior quartermaster was assigned full

responsibility for the survey directorate, consisting of the map-making sections of the staff.⁶⁹ The other two officers divided the duties of intelligence gathering and analysis, supervision of the Kriegsakademie, and the management of the general staff archives and library.⁷⁰

The chief of staff personally supervised the personnel section of the Grosser Generalstab and the military history section.⁷¹ He was authorized direct communication with all general staff officers in the field on matters of staff business, but he did not have any command authority over line units. The king of Prussia retained command authority, although in time of war the chief of staff gained practical control of the army.⁷² Despite the chief of staff's lack of command authority, he exerted a powerful influence, primarily through his control of Truppen Generalstab officers (which resulted in significant influence on the line units) and his command of the Grosser Generalstab officers.⁷³ The relatively small size of the central general staff (some one hundred Grosser Generalstab officers were on duty in 1905), combined with the use of the superior quartermasters as effective managers, gave the chief of staff a large degree of control over the work of the central staff; he was able to control the daily operations of the staff through periodic meetings with the superior quartermasters, who were themselves given large amounts of authority in making decisions on matters of some importance.⁷⁴ The direct influence of the chief of staff was the strongest in the operations planning sections of the staff, and in all work directly involved with plans for the next war.⁷⁵

Planning for the next war was the most important work of the Prussian general staff. The influence of Chief of Staff Alfred von

Schlieffen on operations planning was acknowledged by contemporary accounts, and has been emphasized by recent historians.⁷⁶ The problems which confronted Schlieffen during his chief of staff years (1891-1905) continued through the tenure of Chief of Staff Helmut von Moltke (nephew of Count Moltke), chief of staff from 1906 to 1914. The German leadership's perception of an encirclement of Germany became only more certain in the formation of the Entente Cordiale of 1904, at the Algeiras Conference of 1906, the Bosnian Crisis of 1908/9, and during the Agadir Crisis of 1911. The army, and the general staff, were left with only an alliance with Austria-Hungary and an accord with Italy. War, if it came, and for German leaders it appeared to be inevitable, would pit Germany against Russia, France, and probably Great Britain.⁷⁷ Operational plans had to be drawn for this next war, and both Schlieffen and Moltke the younger spent much of their time on the preparation of these plans.⁷⁸

These plans were constantly improved through the use of war games (Kriegspiel) by the subordinate sections of the central general staff. The use of these simulations as a method of instruction and as a means of plan formulation and improvement was standard throughout the Prussian general staff system; these simulations were an extension of Moltke's applied method in use at the Kriegsakademie.⁷⁹ Each subordinate section of the general staff conducted war games suitable to their particular mission. The entire staff also conducted an annual series of war games during the annual staff ride. General staff officers, through the use of these simulations, were continually being trained in their professions, from their initial experiences at the staff college until their last war game with the general staff.⁸⁰ This constant "honing the blade" of their staff system would serve the German military well during the First World War.

The outbreak of war in August found the Prussian general staff well prepared for war. Colonel Groener, like many of his fellow staff officers, was called back from summer leave late in July; he prepared his Grosser Generalstab section for war by refusing any confusing last-minute minor alterations in his long-established and oft-simulated plans.⁸¹ Despite some last-minute concern by Wilhelm II and Moltke about changing the mobilization scheme, and the "famous scene" between these two men where Moltke refused to alter the mobilization plans, the German mobilization ordered on the first day of August progressed with "clockwork precision."⁸²

Colonel Groener, on receipt of the mobilization order, changed his duty title from Chief of the Eisenbahn Abteilung of the central general staff to Chief of the Bureau of Railway Affairs (Chef des Feld-eisenbahnwesens). This expansion was typical of the general staff's approach to wartime mobilization. Individual officers would gain control over more and more personnel, and gain larger and larger areas of responsibility in their field of expertise. This system of expansion remained the Prussian (now German) general staff's approach to the war until 1918; alterations were made to structures and organizations as the need arose, but the general staff officers retained control of the system.⁸³ As examples of this expansion, an expansion based on a quickly available pool of trained reserve officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted men, Colonel Groener and his classmate from the Kriegsakademie, Colonel Max Hoffman, offer interesting insights into the Prussian approach to fighting a modern war.

The mobilization order brought under Groener's control all railroads in Germany and in all areas occupied by German troops. He took command of railway units totaling more than 32,500 officers and men.⁸⁴

From the first day of mobilization, Groener's greatly enlarged command analyzed and filed reports on bridges, tunnels, and railroad yards in Belgium, France, and Russia.⁸⁵ The railway bureau was also responsible for the movements of all trains in Germany. Military trains began rolling on the first day of mobilization; from the second day of mobilization until mobilization plus twenty-one days (M+21) no civilian railroad traffic was permitted.⁸⁶ By the end of August, the German railroads had concentrated and deployed more than three million men without a major delay or difficulty. On August 22, the Kaiser thanked Groener and his men for carrying out their duties "in the spirit of the highest traditions of the German Army."⁸⁷ The German mobilization and deployment had been successful because of the efficient German railway net, and because of the efficient training and organization of the Prussian general staff.

While Groener, and his men, were fulfilling the best traditions of the Prussian army, another staff officer was creating a new tradition on the Eastern Front. This officer, working as a Truppen Generalstab officer, was Colonel Max Hoffman. Hoffman was familiar with the terrain and situation in East Prussia in the summer of 1914; he had been assigned to this area for several years, and he had prepared plans for a defense against a possible Russian attack against East Prussia.⁸⁸

The Prussian staff was aware by the autumn of 1911 (when the intelligence section of the central general staff purchased Russian war plans from a Russian general staff officer) that the Russian army was committed to an early attack on East Prussia.⁸⁹ It was also common knowledge among the Prussian staff officers that such an attack would be divided by the Masurian Lakes; German action against the divided Russian forces could be decisive. Early reverses on the Eastern Front

forced back the German forces in August 1914 despite their knowledge of the Russian plans. Such incompetence was not tolerated; the German commander in the East (von Prittwitz) and his chief of staff were summarily relieved by Moltke on August 21. The replacement officers were Generals von Hindenburg, who was called out of retirement, and Ludendorff, the hero of Liège; they were soon on their way to the East in a special railway train.⁹⁰

Prior to their arrival, indeed prior to Prittwitz's relief, Colonel Hoffman, the operations officer for the German forces in East Prussia, had conceived a plan. He would move an army corps by rail from the left to the right flanks of the German army while marching the rest of the army also to the left, and encircle and destroy the Russian armies one at a time. It is certainly no coincidence, as has often been speculated, that Ludendorff conceived of a similar plan while riding his special train to the East. Both officers were simply reacting in similar manner to a situation they had seen simulated in the "Red Den" time after time. The situation had been foreseen before the war by the Prussian general staff; Ludendorff and Hoffman were only reacting to a situation for which they had received extensive peacetime preparation. The result of these plans was the destruction of Samsonov's army at Tannenberg; the Russian threat in the East was temporarily eliminated.⁹¹

In 1914, efficient railroad organization and effective army-level staff work alone could not win the war. The Prussian army, and the German Reich, were unprepared for a long war; the chaos and confusion characteristic of the peacetime Prussian army continued throughout the war, making preparations for a long war difficult, at best.⁹² The Prussian general staff itself was not without faults. According to Liddell Hart, all too

often (from the German standpoint) junior officers were given tremendous responsibilities as chiefs of staff of corps and armies, and they "often took momentous decisions with hardly a pretense of consulting their superiors . . . such a system had grave objections and from it came the grit in the wheels which not infrequently marred the . . . working of the German war machine."⁹³

After the defeat of the Central Powers, in part due to the efforts of the victors and in part to the problems of the German leadership and the German system, the German general staff was outlawed in accordance with the provisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty. The Prussian general staff ceased to exist in the form known to the world before 1918; a general staff would survive under a series of disguises during the Weimar period, but the Prussian general staff would never again control the military destinies of the German people.

Before its defeat and dissolution, the Prussian staff system had extended its influence beyond the frontiers of the German Reich. Indeed, some historians believe that the German armies were defeated in 1914 partially because the French and British staffs, through selective imitation of the Prussian general staff and the inauguration of innovative improvements on this model, had improved their staff systems far beyond the Prussian changes to the Prussian system from 1871 to 1914.⁹⁴ The French army had borrowed many ideas from the Prussian army after its defeat in 1870/71. Among these ideas was the idea of general conscription, and the idea of a general staff. The campaigns of 1870/71 were "hardly over when the French government made its first move toward creating a high command on the Prussian model," according to the foremost historian of the French army.⁹⁵ The reforms which occurred in the French

army from 1871 to 1914 were reactions to their military defeat in 1870/71 and to the problems faced by the army in domestic politics. The struggles of the Boulanger and Dreyfus affairs, particularly the latter, severely hampered the reforms of the French army at the same time they made reforms more necessary.⁹⁶

The French borrowed from the Prussian army both the organization of a general staff (with some major alterations), and the idea of a staff college to train officers for duty with the staff. In imitation of the Kriegsakademie, the French staff college, the École Supérieure de Guerre, instructed lieutenants in general staff duties, military history and technology, and a smattering of liberal arts subjects. Upon graduation, these officers were certified as qualified general staff officers, but the French army, unlike the Prussian, felt that officers should be considered primarily line officers and only secondarily general staff officers.⁹⁷

The organization of the French general staff was also partially based on the Prussian model. Reforms were made from June 1871 through July 1911; the July 1911 reform created a chief of staff who was more powerful than the Prussian chief of staff. Joffre, the first officer assigned to this position after its reform in 1911, controlled all strategic planning, operational planning, organization, and personnel requirements, and commanded the army as well. After 1911, the French chief of staff worked through a general staff composed of sections responsible for personnel, intelligence, operations and training, and logistics.⁹⁸

The British army also borrowed from the Prussian military institutions in the years from 1871 to 1914. A British staff college existed

before 1871, but the Franco-Prussian War, and the expertise shown by the Prussian general staff officers, according to Brian Bond, "underlined the need for [a college like the Kriegsakademie] to many senior officers who had remained unconvinced by Britain's own experience in the Crimea."⁹⁹ Despite this new interest in the staff college and some resultant improvements in the quality of instructors and the curriculum, the British military remained without a general staff to utilize the graduates of the staff college until the disasters of the Boer War encouraged massive reforms of the entire British army.¹⁰⁰

The reforms of the British staff system in the years after the Boer War were largely the work of Richard Burdon Haldane. This man, who became the civilian head of the War Office in 1905, began a program of reforms of both the line and staff organizations of the British army.¹⁰¹ In the years from 1905 to 1914, a British general staff was gradually developed, based, in part, on systems in use in Prussia. Officers were admitted to the general staff corps on the strength of their service record and on their passage of the staff college; the general staff officers alternated duty between the staff and line units. The general staff collected military information, studied the problems of warfare in different areas of the world, analyzed foreign military activities, and prepared recommendations for reforms of the army organization.¹⁰² The British staff system operated under a different system of control than the Prussian system: the British army was controlled by a civilian prime minister. The king was only very nominally in control of the military; the real power lay in civilian hands.¹⁰³

The British and French armies were not the only military forces to imitate and adapt the Prussian system. The influence of the Prussian

army extended to the Pacific; during the Russo-Japanese War, the Prussian military attaché to the Japanese army asked the chief of staff of a Japanese field army what lessons the Japanese were learning from the war. The Japanese officer replied that his army was not thinking of learning lessons--they would rather translate the Prussian texts on the war and learn from them.¹⁰⁴ The pervasive Prussian military influence, an influence which extended from London to Tokyo, also reached Washington, D.C. It is to the American army, and its nineteenth-century reforms, that we now turn.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. John R. Beishline, Military Management for National Defense (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), p. 17; Dallas D. Irvine, "The Origins of Capital Staffs," Journal of Modern History 10 (June 1938): 167-170.
2. Paul M. Kennedy, "The Operations Plans of the Great Powers, 1880-1914: An Analysis of Recent Literature," Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen 1 (1976): 189-190.
3. Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany, 4 vols., trans. Heinz Norden (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1970), 2:123.
4. Quoted in Herbert Rosinski, The German Army (London: The Hogarth Press, 1940), pp. 114-115.
5. Michael Howard, The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871 (London: Rupert-Hart-Davis, 1961), pp. 25-26; Rosinski, German Army, pp. 119-121.
6. Howard, Franco-Prussian War, pp. 25-26.
7. Ibid., p. 23.
8. The Bavarian army retained the most independence--partially due to the existence of the Wittlesbach dynasty in Bavaria. Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 219-220; Wiegand Schmidt-Richberg, Die Generalstäbe in Deutschland 1871-1945 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1962), pp. 15-33.
9. Leo Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg, "The German General Staff, Part I: The Imperial Period," Military Review 42 (November 1962): 27; Craig, Politics, pp. 220-221.
10. The kaiser had full peacetime, and wartime, control of the imperial navy, which, unlike the army, was actually an imperial force. Craig, Politics, pp. 220-221.
11. Ibid., pp. 219-222.
12. Great Britain, General Staff, Handbook of the German Army in War: April 1918 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918), p. 36.

13. Ritter, Sword and Scepter, 2:202.
14. Craig, Politics, pp. 227-232, 240-243.
15. Ibid., pp. 240-242; Ritter, Sword and Scepter, 2:126-127.
16. Martin Kitchen, The German Officer Corps 1890-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 10.
17. Ibid., pp. 7-15; Craig, Politics, p. 229.
18. Walter Görlitz, History of the German General Staff 1657-1945, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 145.
19. Jonathan Steinberg gives an example of army-navy ad hoc co-operation in his article "A German Plan for the Invasion of Holland and Belgium, 1897," Historical Journal 6 (1963): 107-119; for the rivalry between the army and the navy see V. R. Berghahn, Germany and the Approach of War in 1914 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).
20. The private papers of Wilhelm Groener, a Württemberg officer assigned to the Prussian general staff in the years preceding the First World War, are relevant. These papers, available in microfilm from the U.S. National Archives (M-137), are an invaluable source for any analysis of the Prussian staff system, its personnel, and its educational and training methods.
21. Daniel J. Hughes, "The Social Composition of the Prussian Generalcy, 1871-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), pp. 249-291.
22. Ibid., pp. 158-163; Prussia, Kriegsministerium, Rang und Quartierliste der Königlich Preussischen Armee und des XIII (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps 1912 (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1912), pp. 8-20.
23. A British Officer, The German Army from Within (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), p. 139.
24. Theodore Schwan, Report on the Organization of the German Army (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 68.
25. Wilhelm Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, ed. Friederich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1957), p. 55.
26. E. von Selasen-Selasinsky, "Die Kriegsakademie: Persönliche Erinnerungen," Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch 1972 (Munich: Schild Verlag, 1972), p. 108.
27. This thesis is concerned with the formal education of staff officers, not with general military education. Pre-commissioning education in Germany before the First World War was clearly inferior to that found at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Efforts were

made to improve the Prussian cadet schools using West Point as a model. Cadet education, and the education of staff officers, are totally different educational systems; this thesis is concerned with education as experienced at the Kriegsakademie, at the United States Army's Leavenworth Schools and Army War College. See Correlli Barnett, "The Education of Military Elites," Journal of Contemporary History 2 (1967): 5-36.

28. Spencer Wilkinson, The Brain of an Army (London: Macmillan, 1890), p. 153.

29. B. Poten, Geschichte des Militär-Erziehungs- und Bildungswesens in den Landen deutscher Zunge (Berlin: A. Hofmann, 1896), p. 306.

30. British Officer, German Army, p. 138.

31. Karl Kraft, Handbuch für die Vorbereitung zur Kriegsakademie (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1916), pp. vi-viii.

32. British Officer, German Army, pp. 138-139.

33. Geyr von Schweppenburg, "German General Staff," p. 21.

34. Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, pp. 56-57; Dorothea Groener-Geyr, General Groener: Soldat und Staatsman (Frankfurt am Main: Societäts Verlag, 1955), pp. 24-25.

35. Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 57.

36. Prussia, Kriegsministerium, Lehrordnung der Königlichen Kriegsakademie (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1903), p. 22, has a chart of all courses offered at the staff college in 1903; Wilkinson, Brain of an Army, pp. 162-163, has a similar chart, translated from the Lehrordnung for 1889. There were no substantive changes in the curriculum between 1889 and 1903.

37. This table is drawn from Wilkinson's translation of the 1889 Lehrordnung contained in Brain of an Army, p. 162. The 1903 Lehrordnung shows the same courses except that English has been added as a third alternative foreign language.

38. Groener-Geyr, General Groener, pp. 22-25.

39. Wilkinson, Brain of an Army, p. 142.

40. Selasen-Selasinsky, "Kriegsakademie," p. 110.

41. Paul Leopold Bronsart von Schellendorff, The Duties of the General Staff, trans. British General Staff (London: Harrison and Sons for His Majesty's Printing Office, 1905), p. 48.

42. Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 61. Infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineer officers attended the staff college. Geyr von Schweppenburg asserts that few cavalry officers attended the school.

Comparison of total commissioned strengths of the branches and the attendance records of the Kriegsakademie, drawn from Poten, Geschichte, p. 306, demonstrate that the students were drawn equally from each branch in direct proportion to the strength of each branch.

43. Schwan, Report, p. 80; Selasen-Selasinsky, "Kriegsakademie," p. 109.

44. Selasen-Selasinsky, "Kriegsakademie," p. 109.

45. Prussia, Kriegsministerium, Lehrordnung 1903, pp. 6-11.

46. Karl Kraus, "Vom Werden, Wesen, und Wirken den Preussischen Generalstäben," Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht 9 (1958): 214-215.

47. These notes are located in Wilhelm Groener, Wilhelm Groener Papers, United States National Archives Microfilm, M-137, roll 17, Stücke 155-156.

48. Friedrich Bernhardt, Germany and the Next War, trans. Allen H. Powles (New York: Longmans, Green, 1914), pp. 224-225.

49. Rosinski, German Army, p. 133; Basil Liddell Hart, The Real War: 1914-1918 (New York: Little, Brown, 1930), p. 38.

50. Wilkinson, Brain of an Army, pp. 167-168, and I. Verdy du Vernois, A Tactical Ride, trans. Eben Swift (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Staff College Press, 1906), pp. 7-12, give accurate descriptions of staff and practice staff rides.

51. Max Hoffman became the operations officer of the East Prussian defense forces in 1914. His role in the actions on this front will be discussed below.

52. Wilhelm Groener Papers, roll 18, Stuck 164.

53. Poten, Geschichte, p. 307.

54. Geyr von Schweppenburg, "German General Staff," pp. 24-26; Schwan, Report, p. 69.

55. Poten, Geschichte, p. 307.

56. Richard Knötel, Herbert Knötel, and Herbert Sieg, Uniforms of the World, trans. Ronald G. Ball (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), p. 162.

57. Geyr von Schweppenburg, "German General Staff," p. 26.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid. The number of probationary officers who were appointed general staff officers varied widely. In some classes, nearly all the

officers were accepted into the general staff corps; in other classes only a few were appointed. Information drawn from a comparison of Prussia, Kriegministerium, Rangliste, for several years.

60. Wilkinson, Brain of an Army, pp. 133-134.

61. Promotion to general rank was often dependent more on social origins than purely military efficiency. For the purpose of this thesis, the generals of the general staff are not as important as the company and field grade officers who composed 95 percent of the staff; Hughes, "Social Composition," pp. 169-171.

62. Bronsart von Schellendorff, Duties, pp. 48-49, 62-64.

63. Groener-Geyr, General Groener, p. 351, has a chronology of Groener's career.

64. Theodore Schwan, "Supplement to Report on the Organization of the German Army" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), compared to Bronsart von Schellendorff's organization charts for 1904 in Duties, supports this idea.

65. Bronsart von Schellendorff, Duties, pp. 40-41.

66. Ibid.

67. Schwan, "Supplement"; Bronsart von Schellendorff, Duties, pp. 39-42.

68. Each section of the Grosser Generalstab was numbered, but the numbers were not sequential and had, apparently, no functional utility.

69. Lieutenant Colonel Zglinicki, "Die Kartographische Abteilung der Königlich Preussischen Landesaufnahme," Vierteljahrshefte für Truppenführung und Heereskunde 3 (1906): 685-689.

70. Schwan, "Supplement"; Schmidt-Richberg, Generalstäbe, p. 34; Major Buddecke, "Die Bibliothek des Grossen Generalstabes," Vierteljahrshefte für Truppenführung und Heereskunde 9 (1912): 103-107.

71. Schwan, "Supplement"; Schmidt-Richberg, Generalstäbe, p. 34.

72. Prussia, Armee, Grosser Generalstab, Geschäftsordnung für den Grosser Generalstab und die Landesaufnahme 1913 (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohne, 1913), pp. 1-4.

73. Görlitz, History of German General Staff, pp. 139-140.

74. There were also some one hundred probationary and auxiliary officers in the central general staff in 1905. Eight years later, this number had increased by some 10 percent. Prussia, Kriegministerium, Rangliste 1912, pp. 15-30; Schwan, "Supplement."

75. Bronsart von Schellendorff, Duties, p. 27.

76. See, for example, Krauss, "Vom Werden, Wesen, und Wirken," pp. 266-273; Hajo Holborn's essay on Schlieffen in Edward Meade Earle, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), pp. 187-195; Liddell Hart, Real War, pp. 46-48; Kitchen, Officer Corps, p. 3. The basic Schlieffen Plan, which was adapted by Moltke the younger, called for an invasion of Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg with massive forces. A small force would defend the East until France was defeated. Some type of German move through Belgium was recognized by many observers well before the outbreak of war in 1914. See "Y", "The German Plan of Campaign against France," Fortnightly Review, n.s. 90 (September 1911): 463-471.

77. Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, trans. W. W. Norton and Co. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), pp. 29-38; Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, pp. 135-136.

78. Hermann von Kuhl, Der deutsche General Stab im Vorbereitung und Durchführung des Weltkriegs (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1920), p. 126, gives a highly biased view of the Prussian general staff on the eve of the war.

79. Ibid.

80. Groener Papers, rolls 18 and 19, contain voluminous documentation on the use of war games in the Eisenbahn Abteilung of the central general staff from 1905 to 1914.

81. Helmut Haeussler, General William Groener and the Imperial German Army (Madison, Wis.: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1962), pp. 58-59.

82. Cyril Falls, The Great War (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1959), p. 42; Rosinski, German Army, p. 143; Barbara Tuchman, The Guns of August (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 93-95; Fischer, Germany's Aims, pp. 86-87, for the kaiser's last-minute desires to alter the mobilization and deployment plans from an attack on France to an attack on Russia in an attempt to keep Britain neutral, at least temporarily.

83. Hermann Cron, Die Organisation des deutschen Heeres im Weltkrieg (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1923), pp. 121-124.

84. Wilhelm Groener, "Die Eisenbahnen im Weltkrieg," p. 5, copy located in Wilhelm Groener Papers, roll 12, Stücke 122-123.

85. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

86. Adolph Sarter, Die deutschen Eisenbahnen im Krieg (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1930), p. 82; Hermann von Kuhl and General von Bergmann, Movements and Supply of the German First Army during August and September, 1914, trans. U.S. Army War College Historical Section (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: The Command and General Staff School Press,

1929), p. 81; C. S. Napier, "Strategic Movement by Rail in 1914," Journal of the Royal United Services Institute 30 (February 1935): 78.

87. Sarter, Deutschen Eisenbahnen, p. 82; Germany, Reichsarchiv, Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918, 12 vols. (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1925-1930), 1:142-143, 152.

88. Bernd-Felix Schulte, Die deutsche Armee 1900-1914: Zwischen Beharren und Verändern (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1977), pp. 308-310.

89. Max von Hoffman, The War of Lost Opportunities, trans. International Publishers (New York: International Publishers, 1925), p. 4.

90. Norman Stone, The Eastern Front 1914-1917 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p. 61.

91. Ibid., pp. 61-63; Hoffman, War of Lost Opportunities, pp. 14-15; Falls, Great War, p. 56; Wilhelm Groener, "Besprechung der Schlusssaufgaben 1912/13. Erste Aufgabe," Wilhelm Groener Papers, roll 19, Stück 171, is the record of a general staff war game which analyzed the Masurian Lakes and Tannenberg situation two years before the war.

92. J. L. Farrar, Jr., "The Short War Illusion: The Syndrome of German Strategy, August-December 1914," Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen 2 (1972): 39-52.

93. Liddell Hart, Real War, pp. 38-39.

94. Robert B. Asprey, The First Battle of the Marne (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1962; reprint ed., Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 127; Sewall Tyns, The Campaign of the Marne 1914 (New York: Longmans, Green, 1935), p. 35.

95. David B. Ralston, The Army of the Republic: The Place of the Military in the Political Evolution of France, 1871-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1967), p. 141.

96. Ibid., pp. 140-141.

97. Paul Marie de la Gorce, The French Army: A Military-Political History, trans. Kenneth Douglas (New York: George Braziller, 1963), pp. 9-10. The French staff college was founded in 1875.

98. Ralston, Army of the Republic, pp. 338-339; Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 52, 128-130.

99. Brian Bond, The Victorian Army and the Staff College, 1854-1914 (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), p. 116.

100. Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 609.

101. Williamson, Politics of Grand Strategy, pp. 90-91.

102. John Gooch, The Plans of War: The General Staff and British Military Strategy c. 1900-1916 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 105-108.

103. Williamson, Politics of Grand Strategy, pp. 89-90.

104. Hoffman was the attaché; Hoffman, War of Lost Opportunities, p. 7.

CHAPTER 3

PRUSSIAN INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN MILITARY

ORGANIZATION, 1871-1898

The years from the end of the American Civil War to the start of the Spanish-American War have been called the United States Army's "Dark Ages."¹ Despite the long, hard years of frontier duty, the minuscule size of the American army, and the lack of sufficient appropriations for the army, the years from 1865 to 1898 were not "Dark Ages"; they were years of intense observation of foreign armies, of vociferous advocacy of army reforms, and of the inauguration of a few of these proposals.² This chapter examines the role of the Prussian military as a model for these observations, proposals, and reforms.

Duty in tiny, remote, and uncomfortable outposts, many located west of the Mississippi River, characterized life for most officers and men of the United States Army in the last half of the nineteenth century; the Indian Wars, which persisted from 1866 to 1890, involved most of these officers and men. The greatest single problem for the officers of this tiny regular army (the average strength of the regular military force in these years was less than 25,000 officers and men) was inactivity; many officers used all available means to obtain a transfer from the frontier to more appealing duty in Washington.³ The slowness of officer promotions was another great problem for the army from 1865 to

1898. The glut of veteran Civil War officers was so extensive that officers frequently remained lieutenants for twenty or thirty years. Despite mandatory retirement at age sixty-four, legislated in 1882, this situation continued unabated until the rigors of active duty in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines eliminated the older officers.⁴ The problems of the officer corps were aggravated by a public disdain for the regular army. This disdain, felt by a Congress imbued with what Samuel P. Huntington termed "business pacifism," and separated physically and socially from the members of the army, became so widespread that appropriations gradually decreased through the 1870s; in 1876, the Congress adjourned without feeling the need to provide funds for the army or navy for the next year. Until November 1877, no one in either service was paid.⁵

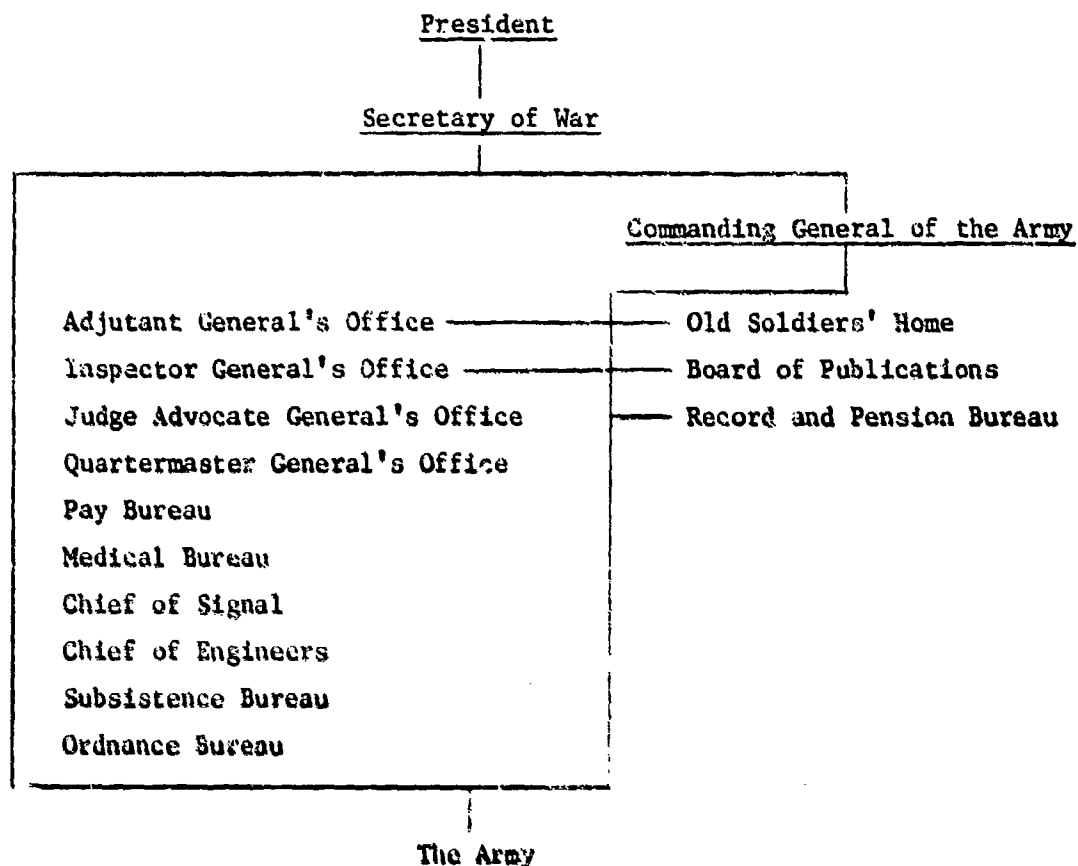
The organization of the American army, which did not appreciably change from 1865 to 1898, was another major problem;⁶ by any standard, War Department administration was a disaster. The president of the United States commanded the army through a secretary of war. This man, often appointed by the president for purely political reasons, usually knew nothing about the military before coming into office. He was assisted in the management of the army by the commanding general of the army and by eleven bureau chiefs.⁷ The secretary of war had full legal control over all bureaus of the War Department; the only limitation was that he was not to become involved in matters of "military discipline and military control." These matters were under the control of the commanding general of the army. The indifferent delineation of authority between the secretary of war and the commanding general (they both had some control over the bureaus of the adjutant general and the inspector

general) was the greatest problem in the War Department; according to Otto L. Nelson, "the attempts to separate command and administrative functions signally failed in practice."⁸ Leonard D. White believed that the other great problem of the war department was how to "coordinate and control the professional bureaus, permanently manned by the officer corps, possessed of the tradition and art of their calling, each jealous of the sister bureaus and all skeptical of the practical value of a civilian secretary."⁹

The most important of these bureaus (see table 4) was the Adjutant General's Office, which controlled all War Department correspondence, controlled the Military Information Division (after 1885), supervised West Point, kept all personnel records, and issued all official orders. The next most influential bureau, and the one, with the Adjutant General's Office, which was controlled by both the secretary and the commanding general, was the Inspector General's Office. This bureau was responsible for the inspection of all troop units, installations, and offices of the army outside of the War Department. The Judge Advocate General's Office was the next most powerful bureau, since it was responsible for all legal matters in the army. The other eight bureaus were responsible for the administrative and logistical functioning of the army. The commanding general controlled only one bureau (the Records and Pensions Bureau) and two minor offices.¹⁰

All officers assigned to the War Department (some seventy-five in 1895) were permanent members of a staff branch of the army. Only death or retirement could remove these officers (short of a court-martial for criminal activity). The bulk of the work done in the War Department was done by these officers, assisted by a few civilian clerks. This system,

Table 4
United States War Department, 1865-1899¹¹



with its confused lines of command and management, with what a contemporary described as its "fossilized military bureaus . . . and adamantine conservatism," and its permanent corps of staff officers (some of whom had not served with troops for thirty years or more), would supervise the first American overseas war in 1898.¹²

The American army from 1865 to 1898 was not blind to the problems involved with its senior management, nor was it blind to European developments in military organization and technology.¹³ Before the Civil War,

the American army had sent observers to Europe, notably a three-officer commission to study the forces engaged in the Crimean War; but this commission, like many of its predecessors, was ultimately concerned with the technical and material alterations applicable to the American army. Discussions of proper marching equipment for infantry, proper saddles for horses, and efficient field engineering techniques form the bulk of these reports.¹⁴ Little attention was given to military management or planning by American military observers prior to 1870.

The rapid Prussian victory over France in 1870/71 changed the emphasis for American observations from technical matters to organization, planning systems, and control structures of foreign armies. This altered emphasis can be seen in the report of one of the American observers to the Franco-Prussian War, Colonel (Brevet Major General) William Hazen. Upon his return in 1872, Hazen wrote a book about his experiences of eighteen months in France and Germany. Hazen urged the United States Army to adopt the Prussian military systems, particularly its general staff and military officer education organizations. Hazen wrote that the American staff system, as it existed in 1872, would "dig the grave of the whole service" if reforms based on the Prussian Grosser Generalstab were not begun. Hazen's book, urging the imitation and adaptation of the Prussian general staff and officer postgraduate education, set the tone for observations of European military systems for the next forty years.¹⁵

After the Prussian victory over France, the civilian world also began to observe and discuss the Prussian army.¹⁶ Between 1870 and 1900, encouraged by the rapid development of German military, economic, and industrial power, and by the German attempts to secure "a place in the

sun," many American and European civilians actively discussed the role of the military in Germany and the forms of German military institutions. Some of these observers were American graduate students in Europe, the majority of whom returned to the United States and taught in American colleges and universities.¹⁷ Other observers were American diplomatic and counselor officials in Europe who occasionally reported on military developments.¹⁸ The American military also had access to several reports published by foreign governments on the German (Prussian) military system, including a British government report on the military schools of Europe.¹⁹

But the most influential of these civilian sources was the observation of the Prussian army published by Spencer Wilkinson, an English barrister born in 1858, who, by 1900, was one of the best-known advocates of military reform in the United Kingdom. He wrote several books proposing reform of the British military and naval organizations; his influence on the American army came through his book on the Prussian general staff, The Brain of an Army, published in 1890. Wilkinson drew information from published Prussian material and from personal observation of the Prussian system at work.²⁰ The elder Moltke praised his accuracy and he wrote Wilkinson that his book was a faithful description of the "organization, spirit, and working of our general staff."²¹

These civilian sources of information, including Wilkinson's book, were not as important as the observations of the European armies conducted by American army officers. Between 1870 and 1897, all four American commanding generals were sent on tours of observation to Europe.²² Their reactions to European armies varied. The Prussian general staff impressed General William T. Sherman (commanding general from March 8,

1869 to November 1, 1883), but his perception of the rampant militarism of the Prussian culture worried Sherman.²³ General Philip H. Sheridan (commanding general from November 1, 1883 to August 5, 1888) thought the Europeans knew as much about war as he did, but nothing more.²⁴ A one-year tour of Europe did not particularly impress Lieutenant General John M. Schofield (commanding general from August 5, 1888 to September 29, 1895).²⁵ Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles (commanding general from October 5, 1895 to August 8, 1903) was thankful that the Atlantic Ocean saved America from the need to maintain a large army like those maintained by European nations.²⁶

Not until 1888, when Congress authorized the assignment of military attachés to foreign nations, were junior officers systematically sent to Europe. From 1889 until the outbreak of the Spanish American War in 1898, the American army stationed military attachés in all the major European capitals. These attachés were occupied with "the routine of collecting information and material; making inspection visits and calls; talking to the right people at the right parties; translating, [and] writing reports."²⁷ The majority of attaché reports dealt with the details of military technology, weaponry, communication systems, and logistical matters.²⁸ The attachés frequently sent packets of books and materials to the War Department library and to interested American officers. From 1890 to 1898, there were several massive shipments of books from the attaché in Berlin to the American officer postgraduate school at Fort Leavenworth; many of these books were used as textbooks at the schools.²⁹ The bulk of the attachés' work, naturally, was involved more with the minor details of military life than with proposals for large-scale army reform.

Two attachés who did propose such reforms were Captain Theodore Bingham, military attaché in Berlin from 1890 to 1892, and Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) William Ludlow, military attaché in London from 1893 to 1896.³⁰ Bingham published an article in the Journal of the Military Service Institute of the United States which called for a reform of officer postgraduate education and for the creation of a system of military intelligence collection and analysis.³¹ Ludlow published an article on the "Military Systems of Europe and America" in which he advocated a reform of the American army based on the Prussian military, a military he called the "war school of Europe."³²

Other officers were occasionally sent to Europe. Noteworthy are the trips of Colonel (Brevet Major General) Emory Upton, Lieutenant (later General) Tasker H. Bliss, and Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) Theodore Schwan. Upton, born in Batavia, New York, in 1849, graduated from West Point in 1861 and rose to command a division by 1865. After the Civil War, he was assigned as commandant of cadets at the Military Academy and he wrote the army's infantry tactics text. In 1876, he was ordered on a world tour to observe, and report on, the armies of Asia and Europe. His primary task of learning the techniques of frontier warfare employed by the British and Russian forces in Asia was forgotten when Upton reached Berlin.³³ After observing the Prussian army, he decided to write his report on all the armies he had seen, but to stress the Prussian system in his recommendations.³⁴ Upton's report was published (without government funding) as Armies of Asia and Europe in 1873. He then began a book on American military policy. Unable to continue work due to a developing brain tumor, and suffering severe depression, Upton committed suicide in March 1881. Upton's finished

books, and his partially completed manuscript, made him, according to Maurice Matloff, "the most influential of the younger officers who worked to reform the army."³⁵

Tasker H. Bliss was ordered to Europe ten years after Upton's trip. Bliss, born in Pennsylvania in 1853, had graduated from West Point in 1875, and had made a reputation as a scholarly and well-read young officer. He was assigned as an instructor at the Military Academy and at the Artillery School at Fort Monroe, Virginia, from 1876 to 1885. In 1885, Bliss was assigned as the instructor in military art at the recently organized Naval War College; Commodore Stephen B. Luce, U.S.N., founder and commander of the Naval War College, then ordered Bliss to Europe to observe and report on the European systems of officer education, especially the systems used in Prussia.³⁶ Bliss visited the Prussian Kriegsakademie in March 1886, and he gave a full report of his observations to Luce and Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, assistant commandant at the Naval War College, on his return.³⁷ He also used his observations as material for lectures he gave at the college.³⁸

Theodore Schwan, a German-born American army officer, veteran of the American Civil War (he was promoted to lieutenant from the ranks in 1863, and awarded a brevet to captain for gallantry at Cold Harbor in 1864), was ordered to Germany in 1893.³⁹ He was assigned at the time to the Military Information Division of the Adjutant General's Office; his mission in Germany was to prepare a report of the organization of the German army for publication by the War Department. While in Germany, he consulted the records of the Prussian general staff and staff college, observed the instruction and training of staff officers at the Kriegsakademie and at the "Red Den," and talked with Prussian officers. Upon

his return to Washington, Schwan wrote a perceptive report on the Prussian and other German army organizations published in 1894 by the Military Information Division.⁴⁰

The reform proposals of Empory Upton began a movement toward reform among junior army officers.⁴¹ His first book, Armies of Asia and Europe, was well received by the American officer corps; his second, unfinished book, while not published until 1904, was circulated in manuscript form among the senior, and many of the junior, officers. Upton's arguments in Military Policy were also summarized by Peter Michie in his biography of Upton published in 1885.⁴² Either through reading Upton's books, or by reading of them in Michie's biography, the American professional officer corps became familiar with Upton's proposals for reform based on the Prussian military system. These reform proposals included the development of a school for staff officers, the initiation of rotation of staff-line-staff assignments for staff officers, and the creation of a general staff for war planning.⁴³

Upton in his books also advocated a large standing army for the United States, and restrictions on civilian control of the military. These proposals were not adopted, either during Upton's life or afterward. Congress refused to dispense with the traditional American reliance on a citizen-soldiary, and was also reluctant to agree to a proposal which ignored American tradition and seemed to embrace wholeheartedly the German system of militarism. Fears of "Germanization" or "Prussianization" were raised by Upton's proposals and whenever ideas of a similar nature were raised in Congress. The reluctance to abandon traditional American methods, and the fears of "Germanization," combined with the German-American rivalry from the 1880s on (first over Samoa and later over

other "imperial" issues, such as the 1902 crisis over Venezuelan debts), made Upton's proposals for a large, military-controlled regular army impossible in the United States.⁴⁵

Upton's proposals for reform of the staff and education system of the American army, based on the Prussian model, were more effective. General Sherman knew Upton personally; his decision to start a postgraduate school for officers at Fort Leavenworth in 1881 was due, in part, to the posthumous influence of Upton. Upton's books also stimulated younger officers who were already aware of the problems of the American army; these officers found a forum for their proposals in the military journals which began to be published in the 1880s. Noteworthy among these journals is the Journal of the Military Service Institute of the United States. It began publication in 1880, with some of its editorial work done by the faculty at West Point, and for the next four decades, it published reform proposals for the American army. The Journal conducted an annual prize essay competition; the essay topics ranged from the organization of coast defences to "Our Indian Question." In 1883, 1888, 1892, and 1896, the topics were concerned with the proper organization of the American military system.⁴⁶ The authors of the prize-winning essays for these years, and many other contributors as well, proposed reforms of the American army based on European organizations.⁴⁷ Germany (Prussia) was usually the focus of attention; Samuel P. Huntington believes "the German lessons were frequently misinterpreted and misapplied, but the desire to imitate German institutions was an important force in furthering American military professionalism."⁴⁸

These proposals published by various journals in the years from 1880 to 1898, like Upton's proposals for everything but a postgraduate

officers' school, did not result in many effective reforms. The army experienced minor, and ineffective, reforms in the creation of the Leavenworth schools and in the establishment of a military information section in the War Department: The only reform which made a noticeable change in the American military structure, and function, was the creation of the Naval War College.

The Naval War College had been proposed by Commodore (later Rear Admiral) Stephen B. Luce since the early 1870s; it came into existence after he spent ten years in a near-constant struggle with the leadership of the Department of the Navy for the creation of a college.⁴⁹ On May 30, 1884, Luce became president of a board of officers appointed to determine the course of instruction at the soon-to-be-established Naval War College. The college was a very small institution in the years before 1898; its first class in the fall of 1886 consisted of eight student officers assigned to the course for only one month. Until 1898, the class size averaged twenty officers who attended school for only two or three months.⁵⁰ The Naval War College was designed to prepare officers for duty as high-level staff officers and commanders in time of war. The course achieved this through intensive teaching using Moltke's applied method; much of the course time was occupied with the creation of practice war plans, so that by the mid-1890s the War College was the navy's war planning agency.⁵¹

Luce gained his first ideas of a college to train officers in wartime duties from his observations of European navies and their systems of officer education. He agreed with Admiral David Porter, a navy officer of extensive influence in Washington, who believed in the mid-1870s "the much neglected American navy should look to the German Reich for an

example of an efficient and successfully striving force."⁵²

Luce was also influenced by his contemporary American army officers; he met Emory Upton while both men were stationed in Virginia in 1877. At that time, Upton was adjutant at the United States Army Artillery School at Fort Monroe. When Luce wrote to the secretary of the navy in August 1877, he recommended that a naval war college be established using the program of instruction at Fort Monroe as the college's basic course plan.⁵³ Upton encouraged Luce in his efforts to create a war college, and he also exchanged ideas with Luce on the role of officer education in the Prussian military.⁵⁴ Luce knew of the course of instruction started in 1881 by General Sherman at Fort Leavenworth. Luce felt that the courses at Monroe and Leavenworth were a "goad to the navy to produce something similar."⁵⁵

After the creation of the Naval War College in 1884, Luce was further influenced by another army officer, Tasker Bliss. In 1885, Luce requested that one officer be assigned from the War Department to teach military art at the war college;⁵⁶ the officer assigned was Tasker Bliss (whose trip to Europe in 1885 was at Luce's request). The curriculum at the Naval War College was designed, in part, by Bliss to duplicate, as much as possible, the course taught at the staff college in Berlin.⁵⁷ Bliss's influence on Luce, and on the Naval War College, was the last of several influences on the college based on an imitation of the Prussian system. By 1890, the Naval War College, based on Luce's interpretation of these influences, was the only American organization capable of effectively planning the war against Spain which would come in 1898.

American army reforms from 1865 to 1898 were not as effective as the creation of the Naval War College. The only successes, and they

were only partial successes, were the development of officer education and the organization of a small office of military intelligence in the War Department.⁵⁸ Since 1868, schools had existed for the technical instruction of army officers. These schools, including the school for artillery officers at Fort Monroe, were successful in increasing the technical competence of the officer corps.⁵⁹ General Sherman, while he was commanding general (1869-1883), became acquainted with Upton's views on officer education.⁶⁰ Sherman ordered the technical schools expanded to include a school for infantry and cavalry officers; the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry was established at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in May 1881.⁶¹

The Leavenworth school, like the Naval War College, had serious problems in the years before the Spanish-American War. The first curriculum at Leavenworth attempted to teach the theory of warfare; it was rapidly discovered that the quality of the average student officer's education was inadequate for a theoretical approach. For the first five years, many classes were taught on basic reading and writing skills, arithmetic, and standard military skills.⁶² In 1886, Lieutenant (later Brigadier General) Arthur L. Wagner was assigned to the school as an instructor in the Department of Military Art. Wagner, a 1875 graduate of West Point, and a veteran of the Indian Wars, had just returned from a year-long tour of Europe. When he arrived at Leavenworth, the school gained an instructor who was very interested in education (he had recently served five years as professor of military science at the Louisiana State University and at East Florida Seminary) and who was fully familiar with the Prussian method of officer education.⁶³ Wagner began to institute new procedures at the school, with concentration on the intense use

of war games, practical problem solving, and the applied method.⁶⁴ In 1893, Wagner was named head of the Department of Military Art, a post he held until 1897.⁶⁵ As head of this department, he pressed for more practical instruction, and he began to transform the Leavenworth school into an approximation of the Prussian Kriegsakademie.⁶⁶

Wagner's efforts, assisted by a steady increase in the quality of the students at Leavenworth, and by the existence of a two-year course of instruction at the school (unlike the Naval War College's two or three months), made the School of Application the most profound reform of the American army from 1865 to 1899.⁶⁷ (The course at Leavenworth is discussed more fully in chapter 5.) The greatest single problem for the Leavenworth school was that relatively well-trained officers were being produced, but there was no staff in which they could work. Only after the creation of a general staff in 1903 would the Leavenworth school begin to make a significant impact on the American army as a whole.⁶⁸

The only important alteration in the disastrous organization of the American War Department from 1865 to 1898 was the creation of the Military Information Division of the Adjutant General's Office in late 1865.⁶⁹ This division (MID) was formed, according to Marc Powe, a recent historian of American military intelligence, "in conscious imitation" of European military intelligence sections, notably that part of the Prussian Grosser Generalstab concerned with the collection and analysis of information.⁷⁰ The MID collected military intelligence and had control over the military attaché network, but the division remained weak (usually manned by one officer and four or five civilian clerks) and of little influence until it was reorganized in 1892.⁷¹ This reorganization gave the MID more personnel (total of six officers and some

dozen civilian clerks), and more influence in the army. It was now responsible for all collection, classification, and dissemination of all military intelligence; it retained full control of the attachés; it was given the task of preparing and maintaining a library and the War Department museum. The MID was also given the task of preparing mobilization plans for all state militia units in time of war.⁷² This planning mission was never fully carried out due to lack of funds and personnel. In 1897, Arthur L. Wagner was appointed chief of the MID; he, and the division, were given the mission of collecting data and publishing reports on the military situation in Cuba, and on the strength of the Spanish army and navy. On the eve of the Spanish-American War, the MID was the only part of the War Department reorganized since the end of the Civil War.⁷³

The foundation for the reorganization to come after the Spanish-American War was formed in the 1880s and 1890s. The disappearance of the taxing Indian Wars, the increasing complexity of military technology, and the rapid industrialization of America, caused the formation of a new type of professional officer--an officer more concerned with the future than with tradition, an officer eager and willing to learn from foreign models.⁷⁴ This type of officer, whom we have seen in Upton, Wagner, Bliss, Schwan, and others, was slowly bringing enlightened management and planning to the American army. R. Ernest Dupuy was not entirely correct when he stated:

Except for a handful of far-thinking officers such as Emory Upton and Arthur L. Wagner, and others of the "intelligentsia" of the Military Service Institution, the results of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 and the growing military shadow of the German Empire went unnoticed. The sea was still wide.⁷⁵

The sea was still wide, but there were more officers aware of the army's problems, and more officers aware of the Prussian model, than Dupuy would have us believe.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Maurice Matloff, ed., American Military History (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), p. 288.
2. Peter Karsten, "Armed Progressives: The Military Reorganizes for the American Century," in The Military in America, ed. Peter Karsten (New York: The Free Press, 1980), pp. 246-247.
3. Heath Twitchell, Jr., Allen: The Biography of an Army Officer, 1859-1930 (Rutgers, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1974), pp. 27-30; for the activities of the officers and men of the Regular Army during the Indian Wars, see Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indians, 1866-1891 (New York: Macmillan, 1974).
4. Karsten, "Armed Progressives," pp. 246-247; Russell F. Weigley, Towards an American Army (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 139. In 1891, the average age of all artillery captains was slightly over fifty years--none were under forty. Of all first lieutenants, the average age was forty-five.
5. Matloff, American Military History, p. 288; R. Ernest Dupuy, The Compact History of the United States Army (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), pp. 156-157.
6. Beishline, Military Management, p. 19.
7. Alvin Brown, The Armor of Organization (New York: Hibbert, 1953), pp. 179-190.
8. Otto L. Nelson, National Security and the General Staff (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), p. 21; Graham A. Cosmas, An Army for Empire: The United States Army and the Spanish-American War (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1971), chapter 1.
9. Leonard D. White, The Republican Era: A Study in Administrative History (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 134.
10. Cosmas, Army for Empire, pp. 16-18.
11. Nelson, National Security and the General Staff, p. 17.
12. Theodore Alfred Bingham, "The Prussian Great General Staff and what it Contains that is Practical from an American Standpoint," Journal of the United Service Institute of the United States 13 (July

1892): 669. (This journal is hereafter cited as JMSIUS.) Information on size of War Department staff drawn from Register of the United States Army 1895 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895); the strength of the army in 1895 was 2,145 officers and 25,000 men.

13. Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 233.

14. Alfred Mordecai, Report of Major Alfred Mordecai of the Ordnance Department (Washington, D.C.: Ordnance Department, 1861); George Brinton McClellan, European Cavalry, including details of the Cavalry Service among the Principal Nations of Europe (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1861); U.S. Military Commission to Europe 1855-56, Report on the Art of War in Europe in 1854, 1855, and 1856; Report of Richard Delafield, Corps of Engineers (Washington, D.C.: G. W. Bowman Printer, 1860), are all examples of this type of technical reporting by American observers.

15. William Babcock Hazen, The School and the Army in Germany and France, with a diary of siege life at Versailles (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872), pp. 245, 382.

16. Richard Allen Andrews, "Years of Frustration: William T. Sherman, the Army, and Reform, 1869-1883" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1968), p. 81.

17. There were some nine thousand graduate students from the United States in Germany between 1820 and 1920; Jurgen Herbst, The German Historical School in American Scholarship (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 1-6.

18. Frank M. Brundage to Secretary of State (relayed to Secretary of War), September 23, 1898, Document Nr. 140481, AGO Correspondence, RG 94, NARC, is one example of the reports of diplomats in Europe.

19. Henry Barnard, Military Schools and Courses of Instruction in the Science and Art of War (New York: E. Steiger, 1872; reprint ed. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), pp. 10, 260; Great Britain, Royal Commission on Military Education, Accounts of the Systems of Military Education in France, Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, and the United States (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1870).

20. J. M. Scammell, "Spencer Wilkinson and the Defense of Britain," Military Affairs 4 (Fall 1940): 129-132; Jay Luvaas, The Education of an Army (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 254-261.

21. Luvaas, Education of an Army, p. 259.

22. William T. Sherman, Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman (New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1891), p. 452; Philip H. Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan (New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1883),

pp. 446-453; John M. Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army (New York: The Century Co., 1897), pp. 451-453; Nelson A. Miles, Serving the Republic (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911), pp. 262-267.

23. Andrews, "Years of Frustration," p. 86.

24. Weigley, Towards, p. 138.

25. Schofield, Forty-six Years, p. 451.

26. Miles, Serving the Republic, p. 267.

27. Twichell, Allen, p. 86.

28. A search of the National Archives attaché reports reveals little; most of the reports were destroyed in a "house-cleaning" in the early 1920s. The Despatch Books and Cross Reference Sheets of the U.S. Army General Staff, Military Information Division, Old Military Records Division Record Group 165, are the only record of these reports extant.

29. Ibid.; see especially the notations on the reports of Captain Robert K. Evans for January 18 and 28, 1893, August 26, 1893, June 25, 1895, and July 2, 1896 in Box 10.

30. The American military attachés to Berlin from the advent of the attaché system to the break in diplomatic relations during World War I were: 1LT James Sanford, 1889-1890; CPT Theodore Bingham, 1890-1892; CPT Robert K. Evans, 1892-1896; CPT Henry L. Allen, 1896-1898; LTC John Kerr, 1900-1902; CPT William S. Biddle, 1902-1906; COL John P. Wisser, 1906-1908; CPT Samuel G. Shattle, 1909-1911; CPT Alfred W. Bjornstad, 1912-1913; MAJ George T. Langhorne, 1913-1915. This list was compiled from the American Army Register and from the Almanach de Gotha.

31. Bingham, "Prussian Great General Staff," pp. 667-669.

32. William Ludlow, "Military Systems of Europe and America," North American Review 160 (1895): 73.

33. Upton was accompanied by two junior officers, Major George Forsyth and Captain J. P. Sanger (who later was a member of the "Ludlow Board"--see chapter 4); Emory Upton, The Armies of Asia and Europe (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1878; reprint ed. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. iv.

34. Matloff, American Military History, pp. 288-289; Peter S. Nichie, The Life and Letters of Emory Upton (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1885; reprint ed. New York: Arno Press, 1979), pp. 1, 41, 67-178, 241-249, 386-387; Richard C. Brown, "General Emory Upton: The Army's Nahan," Military Affairs 17 (Fall 1953): 126.

35. Matloff, American Military History, p. 289.

36. Adjutant General Hugh Drum to Tasker H. Bliss, October 12, 1885, Tasker Howard Bliss Papers, United States Military History Research Collection Archives, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (collections at Carlisle hereafter cited as USAMHRC); Frederick Palmer, Bliss, Peacemaker (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934), pp. 1-29.

37. Commandant, Kriegsakademie, to Tasker H. Bliss, March 25, 1896, Alfred Thayer Mahan to R. P. Rodgers, July 29, 1887, both letters in Tasker Howard Bliss Papers, USAMHRC.

38. Palmer, Bliss, pp. 31-32.

39. Who's Who in America 1901-1902 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Co., 1901), pp. 1001-1002; United States Army, Adjutant General's Office, Official Army Register 1894 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 8.

40. Theodore Schwan, Report on the Organization of the German Army, Publication No. 2 of the Bulletin of Military Notes of the Military Information Division, Adjutant General's Office (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894); Theodore Schwan, "Supplement to Report on the Organization of the German Army" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894).

41. Michie, Life and Letters, p. 474; Huntington, Soldier and State, pp. 233-235; Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 281.

42. Stephen E. Ambrose, Upton and the Army (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), pp. 151-152.

43. Ibid., p. 99; Weigley, History, pp. 267-277.

44. Weigley, History, pp. 276-277; Emory Upton, The Military Policy of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904; reprint ed. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), pp. xiii-xiv; Upton, Armies, p. 319.

45. Ambrose, Upton, p. 110. Weigley believes that Upton became infatuated with the Prussian system because Upton was "intense, humorless, single mindedly devoted to the military profession and to efficiency in it, a sober, brooding man [who was therefore] temperamentally receptive to the German system"; from Weigley, History, p. 276.

46. "List of Gold Medalists for Prize Essay 1880-1902," JMSIUS 30 (September 1902): 777-778; Arthur L. Wagner, "The Military Necessities of the United States," JMSIUS 5 (September 1884): 237-271; Arthur L. Wagner, "An American War College," JMSIUS 10 (July 1889): 287-304; James S. Pettit, "The Proper Military Instruction for our Officers: The Method to be employed, its Scope, and full Development," JMSIUS 20 (January 1897): 1-54; Bingham, "Prussian Great General Staff"; and many others.

47. Karsten, "Armed Progressives," p. 229; Dupuy, Compact History, pp. 162-163.

48. Huntington, Soldier and State, p. 235.

49. The United States Navy also had a tremendous increase in its naval building programs in the 1880s and 1890s. Internal reforms of the Navy Department included several new personnel regulations and the creation of a small bureau of naval intelligence in 1882; Karsten, "Armed Progressives," pp. 232-236.

50. Albert Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), pp. 173-175, 182-182.

51. Karsten, "Armed Progressives," p. 237.

52. Alfred Vagts, "Hopes and Fears of an American-German War, 1870-1915," Political Science Quarterly 54 (Winter 1939): 515.

53. Gleaves, Life and Letters, pp. 168-169.

54. Karsten, "Armed Progressives," p. 237; Huntington, Soldier and State, pp. 236-237.

55. Huntington, Soldier and State, pp. 240-241.

56. Ibid., pp. 236-237; Palmer, Bliss, p. 31.

57. Adjutant General Hugh Drum to Tasker Howard Bliss, October 12, 1885, Tasker Howard Bliss Papers, USAMHRC; Palmer, Bliss, pp. 31-32.

58. Huntington, Soldier and State, pp. 237-242; John W. Masland and Laurence I. Radway, Soldiers and Scholars (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 80.

59. United States Army, Artillery School, Historical Sketch of the U.S. Artillery School, Ft. Monroe, Virginia, from 1867 to 1887 (Fort Monroe, Va.: Artillery School Press, 1887); Timothy K. Nenninger, The Leavenworth Schools and the Old Army: Education, Professionalism, and the Officer Corps of the United States Army 1881-1918 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 19.

60. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 19-20; Andrews, "Years of Frustration," pp. 263-265, 293.

61. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, p. 20. Sherman was so deeply involved in the Leavenworth program that he personally selected texts for use in the course; William C. Brown, "General Sherman and the Infantry and Cavalry School," Cavalry Journal 16 (July 1905): 124.

62. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 25-36; Charles King, "The Leavenworth School," Harpers 76 (April 1888): 779.

63. George W. Cullum, et al., eds., Biographical Register of West Point Graduates, 6 vols. (Saginaw, Mich.: Seeman and Peters Printers, 1891-1920), 3:252.

64. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 36-42.

65. Cullum, Biographical Register, 3:252.

66. Wagner, "American War College," pp. 290-291; Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, p. 37. In his effort to create an American war college, Wagner used information from the American military attachés in Berlin; see the reports of July 2, 1896 and July 30, 1896 on the Prussian use of war games, and the report of August 7, 1896 on the Kriegsakademie curriculum, all of which were sent to Wagner, in Box 10, Despatch Books and Cross Reference Sheets, U.S. Army General Staff, Military Information Division, Old Military Records Division Record Group 165, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

67. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 42-49; Elvid Hunt, The History of Fort Leavenworth (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Army Service School Press, 1926), pp. 157-179.

68. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, p. 50.

69. Marc B. Powe, The Emergence of the War Department Intelligence Agency 1885-1918 (Manhattan, Kan.: Military Affairs Press, 1975), pp. 15-16.

70. Ibid., pp. 16-17; Vagts, "Hopes and Fears," pp. 250-251.

71. Powe, Intelligence Agency, pp. 19-22.

72. Ibid., pp. 22-24.

73. Ibid., pp. 17, 27-28.

74. Huntington, Soldier and State, pp. 494-495.

75. Dupuy, Compact History, p. 163.

CHAPTER 4
THE CREATION OF THE AMERICAN GENERAL STAFF,
1898-1903

The American army began to prepare for a war against Spain in 1897. The Military Information Division, headed by Arthur Wagner, prepared reports on the size and disposition of Spanish forces in the Western Hemisphere and on the geographic features of Cuba and Puerto Rico. At the same time, the Naval War College developed plans for a naval war against Spain. In March 1898, Navy Secretary John D. Long and Secretary of War Russell A. Alger formed a two-officer Joint Army-Navy Board to prepare plans for the now imminent war with Spain. This board endorsed the war plan of the Naval War College, a plan which called for a naval war against Spanish forces in the Caribbean, supplemented by small-scale army landings to support naval operations. The war was to be a navy affair. On April 20, 1898, President McKinley endorsed this plan.¹

The American army's role in the Spanish-American War did not develop according to this plan. After Congress declared war on Spain on April 25, 1898, pressure from state political leaders (coupled with a national desire for a quick and aggressive victory) mandated a change in the carefully formulated Joint Board plan. In late April Secretary of War Alger proposed a massive land campaign in Cuba as the best way to end the war quickly.² The War Department changed its mobilization orders from a force of 50,000 Regulars and National Volunteers to an

army of over 100,000--the difference to be drawn from state militia units.³ The strategy adopted by May 1898 called for a large land campaign in Cuba and Puerto Rico, despite the acknowledged lack of supplies and arms for such large amphibious operations.

By midsummer, the problems of the War Department became obvious to all concerned. When engaged in combat, the army fought competently; the greatest problems arose in the area of logistics, transportations, and medical support.⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, then a volunteer lieutenant colonel in the "Rough Riders," wrote that "the delays and stupidity of the Ordnance Department surpasses belief. The quartermaster general is better but bad. There is no head, no management whatever in the War Department. Against a good nation we should be helpless."⁵ Massive problems in the provision of supplies, the organization of the troop camps, and in the basic sanitation needs of the soldiers, combined with poorly trained state troops and an inefficient staff organization, prompted a great public outcry against the War Department.⁶ President McKinley appointed the Dodge Commission, chaired by Grenville M. Dodge, to investigate these problems. Its conclusions, issued in eight large volumes in February 1899, cleared Secretary of War Alger from any blame for the errors committed by the War Department. Instead, the Dodge Report cited the War Department bureau system, clogged with red tape and old officers, as the major source of the problems. The report also blamed Congress for exerting excessive control over the internal management of the War Department both before and during the war. The report concluded by making several recommendations concerning the improvement of War Department control over logistical and supply functions in the field; it made no recommendations for overall reform of the department.⁷

Public criticism and proposals for reform of the War Department continued after the publication of the Dodge Commission Report. Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin, in his official report published in late 1899, urged the adoption of a general staff corps for the army in order to remedy the faults of 1898.⁸ The Journal of the Military Service Institute continued to publish articles on the reform of the army, and on the need for cooperation between the army and the navy.⁹ Congress also pressed through 1899 for an increase in army efficiency but with little positive direction from Secretary of War Alger. In December 1898 alone, there were three bills pending before the House Committee on Military Affairs, as well as a host of minor bills and proposed amendments. Representative John A. Hull, chairman of this committee, pushed his own bill through, a compromise version of which was signed into law by McKinley on March 2, 1899. This bill, which enlarged the regular army from 25,000 men to 100,000 and increased the efficiency of troop unit organizations, did nothing to remedy the problems of War Department management;¹⁰ it was, according to William Ganoe, "only a makeshift."¹¹

President McKinley, confronted with Alger's failure before Congress, and his perpetual struggle for power with Commanding General Nelson A. Miles, forced Alger to resign in July 1899.¹² McKinley, on the recommendation of Cornelius Bliss, secretary of agriculture, appointed Elihu Root as secretary of war. Root was a very famous and experienced corporate lawyer from New York; born in 1845, the son of a college professor, he had been in Berlin the day the Franco-Prussian War began. His career as a lawyer in New York City was distinguished and profitable; many major New York businesses were among his clients. When asked to be secretary of war, Root was told that the president wanted a lawyer

to administer the newly acquired Spanish possessions (the army was responsible for Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines).¹³ During the next five years, Root became the driving force behind reform for the War Department staff system, in addition to being the chief administrator of the new lands.

Root came into office knowing very little about the army.¹⁴ His first days in office were absorbed with the problems of the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. While dealing with these problems, which he believed could be dealt with by the use of what he thought were "the moving powers of the world today . . . effectiveness and harmonious organization," Root also managed to learn enough about the army to be able, within six months, to publish a comprehensive plan for reform.¹⁵ This plan included the creation of an army war planning group, the abolition of permanent staff assignments, and the inauguration of officer attendance at service schools in preparation for staff duty.¹⁶

Root gained this knowledge about the army from several sources, including letters from concerned civilians and military officers, from reading United States Army Military Information Division publications on foreign armies, and from consultations with subordinates in the War Department. Root began by reading the Dodge Commission Report and various army regulations and congressional proposals.¹⁷ He also received letters from interested civil leaders volunteering information of reform proposals; among these people was William C. Church, the influential editor of the Army and Navy Journal.¹⁸ Root's most influential information was drawn from two reports published by the Military Information Division. The older of these was Theodore Schwan's Report on the

Organization of the German Army. The more recent publication was The Staffs of Various Armies, published in January 1899.¹⁹

Schwan's Report was considered to be the last word on the organization of the Prussian general staff, and Root referred to it in his 1902 Annual Report as being the source for his definition of the role of a general staff in a modern army.²⁰ Schwan himself was in Washington in the early days of Root's first year in office; according to Adjutant General Corbin, Schwan's role in "lending a helping hand in the Adjutant General's Office in evolving a suitable staff system and system of military education for the army" was irreplaceable.²¹ In 1901, Schwan wrote Corbin that Root "had profited alike by our own and foreign, especially German, experience" in developing a staff system.²² A large part of this was due to Schwan's Report and to Schwan's assistance in the War Department in 1899.²³

The Staffs of Various Armies also influenced Root. The introduction to this work is a translation of Paul Bronsart von Schellendorf's "classic work on the general staff," The Duties of the General Staff.²⁴ The first sentence of Staffs' introduction is the clear declaration that "the general staff forms an essential part of modern army organization."²⁵ The book goes on to explain that the function of a general staff in peace is to provide for war, that officers for the staff are especially selected and trained, and that appointment to the staff is temporary, not permanent.²⁶ The translation concludes:

The great general staff (Grosser Generalstab), a body of general staff officers who are not attached to an army corps, is intrusted, under the immediate supervision of the chief of staff, with drawing up and preparing schemes for the strategical concentration of the army . . . with collecting and estimating military information, with the study of the theaters of war, with the preparation of military

maps. It is also employed in promoting military science, especially military history, and in the supervision of the training of young officers.²⁷

Substantiation for this book's influence on Root is evident in Root's Annual Report of the Secretary of War for 1899, in which Root outlined his basic plan for reform of the central administration of the army. In this report, he stated that his fundamental consideration was "that the real object of having an army is to provide for war."²⁸ Root then proposed reforms of the administration of the army which included the creation of a "systematic study" group for the preparation of war plans, the "preparation of the materials of war" in times of peace, the "selection according to merit" of officers for staff assignments, and the initiation of a program of officer attendance at schools to study "the science of war, including the duties of the staff."²⁹ Root also proposed the creation of an Army War College (AWC) which would collect information, prepare war plans, study the problems of war, advise the commander-in-chief of faults in the army, and manage officer education.³⁰ Root wanted the war college to function as a general staff (based on the Prussian Grosser Generalstab) rather than as a staff college (based on the Prussian Kriegsakademie).³¹

The implementation of this 1899 plan would take two and a half years. Part of this implementation process was continual consultations with military officers interested in the Root proposals. Henry C. Corbin was the adjutant general of the army while Root was secretary of war; according to Root's biographer, Root "liked Corbin and relied on him," but Corbin's influence on Root's reforms of army administration appears to have been limited.³² He was a man of "absolute personal honesty and devotion to the army," but between 1899, when Corbin called for the

institution of a general staff in his official annual report, and 1902, no record exists of any discussion between Root and Corbin on the topic of a general staff.³³ Corbin's only recorded contribution to Root's reforms after Root came into office was a message Corbin sent in the fall of 1902. Corbin, accompanied by Major General Leonard Wood and Samuel B. M. Young, attended the German maneuvers in September 1902 at the invitation of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Corbin sent a report to Root in which he discussed the "splendid general staff" of the Prussian army. By this time, Corbin's contribution was minimal, since the Root general staff program had been before Congress for eight months.³⁴

A more influential individual in the War Department was Colonel (later Major General) William H. Carter. Carter had served with Emory Upton in the 1870s, won a Congressional Medal of Honor against the Apaches, and had been in the Battle of Wounded Knee; from 1897 to 1904 he served in the Adjutant General's Office, becoming one of Root's closest advisors and his congressional liaison officer from early 1900 to 1904.³⁵ Carter was deeply involved in Root's reform proposals; Carter personally drafted the 1902 general staff bill, and he introduced the works of Upton to Root in 1899.³⁶ Carter also had a significant role in the deliberations of the Ludlow Board, a board of officers appointed by Root to investigate the feasibility of Root's AWC proposals.³⁷ Carter's actual influence was stronger in Root's plans for officer education than in his reforms of the staff system; as we shall see, Carter's ideas on the staff were often ignored in favor of other ideas.³⁸

Upton's influence on Root was limited. Upton's proposals for a detailed reorganization of troop units of the army was accepted by Root, but only a few details of Upton's staff proposals were found to be useful.

Upton's ideas on the alteration of staff and line assignments, and his ideas concerning the qualification of staff officers in service schools were accepted and incorporated into the Root plan. But Upton's more far-reaching proposals were not accepted. By 1900, most of Upton's work had been superseded by other officers' works, and by late 1900, by the work of the Ludlow Board appointed by Root to investigate Root's plans for the AWC.³⁹ On February 19, 1900, the board was ordered to meet for "the purpose of considering regulations with a view to the establishment of a War College for the army." The board consisted of Brigadier General William Ludlow as president, Colonel Henry C. Hasbrouck, and Carter as board secretary.⁴⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Joseph P. Sanger, considered by Ludlow to be the officer in the army best acquainted with foreign armies, was detailed to the board in early July 1900.⁴¹

The Ludlow Board began meeting in late February and met irregularly through October 1900. Its members were assigned different tasks involving the establishment of the AWC; meetings of the board were held to discuss the findings of individual members and to agree on board recommendations. Ludlow and Sanger were sent to Europe in July to investigate European forms of war colleges and general staffs. They returned in early October. Sanger spent three months in Great Britain; Ludlow stayed in London for a short time; he spent most of his time in Germany "for personal investigation and report concerning war college, staff college, and general staff organization and methods in the Prussian military service."⁴² Colonel Sanger found the British military system in such disorder that "little could be done in England reference the general staff and higher military education . . . the general impression is that the results of the South African campaign will lead to considerable modification of the

British military administration."⁴³ General Ludlow was more successful. His trip to Berlin confirmed Schwan's earlier report on the educational system and general staff of Prussia.⁴⁴ Ludlow also met Spencer Wilkinson in London, who gave Ludlow a copy of The Brain of an Army.⁴⁵

When Ludlow and Sanger returned from Europe, the board met to decide on its final report. The officers realized that the AWC as proposed by Root (as a body to create war plans, study problems, and advise the secretary of war and the president) would "constitute a body charged in some respects with the duties and responsibilities imposed upon what is known in foreign services as the general staff."⁴⁶ The board agreed that such a proposal would improve the cohesion and efficiency of army administration, and it recommended the immediate creation of a war college by executive order. The report stipulated that legislative approval of the war college be gained as soon as possible; the officers specifically urged that legislation for a general staff be created "at the earliest possible time."⁴⁷ The board report included a memorandum written by Carter in which he expressed his fears that an AWC would become a drain on the army education system; he recommended that the war college be established at Fort Leavenworth, and that a general staff totally separate from the AWC be formed with congressional approval.⁴⁸ The Ludlow Board Report, which departed from Root's conception of the AWC and staff, was delivered to Root in October 1900.⁴⁹

Ludlow also made a private report on his tour of the Prussian military system. This report was delivered to Root at his home by Ludlow; Carter, the officer responsible for the drafting of reform legislation, did not see this report until June 1902.⁵⁰ Ludlow had not discussed his findings from Europe with the board, but he did discuss the

trip with Root.⁵¹ Ludlow recommended in his report (which is nearly two hundred typewritten pages--much of it copied from Schwan's Report) that the American staff officers be selected from the most successful students at the service schools, that officers be rotated between staff and line assignments, that a central general staff of eight officers (and assorted clerical assistants) be established in Washington, and that a general staff with troops of fifty-eight officers also be established.⁵² Ludlow opposed Carter's recommendation that the AWC be separated from the general staff; Ludlow encouraged Root to put the AWC "in charge of the general staff and in peace constitute an important portion of its duties and labors."⁵³ Ludlow then made eleven specific recommendations on the functions and organization of the AWC, all of which were incorporated into Root's final plan for the college.

The official Ludlow Board Report, and Carter's memorandum which accompanied it, had little influence on Root. Rather the private report of General Ludlow, which apparently only Root had access to until 1902, was the key influence on Root's ideas on the AWC and the general staff. As we shall see later, all of Ludlow's private recommendations were put into effect by 1903. Ludlow's report was based entirely on his experiences in Prussia, his reading of the Schwan report, and his knowledge of The brain of an Army. It is impossible to determine which, if any, of these sources was the determining influence on Ludlow; what is important is that they were all based on the Prussian general staff system.⁵⁴

Nearly a year passed before Root made any further progress on the AWC. From the fall of 1900 until the fall of 1901, the army's problems in the Philippines and elsewhere occupied him; he was not able to concentrate on the war college problem again until late 1901.⁵⁵ That October,

Carter wrote another memorandum for Root in which he again pressed for a separation of the war college from a general staff. In November 1901, a general order was promulgated which established the Army War College as part of the officer postgraduate education system, but the war college was not specifically separated from the army staff system--in fact the AWC would function as the American general staff until August 1903.⁵⁵ In July 1902, another board of officers, this time named the Army War College Board, was appointed by Root. This board was headed by Major General Samuel B. M. Young, Tasker Bliss was the board's secretary, and Carter was the junior member.⁵⁷ The War College Board met regularly for thirteen months; it was primarily concerned with the establishment of the actual war college, with the formation of a general staff, and with the formulation of a basic war mobilization plan.⁵⁸ The work of the AWC Board ended in August 1903 when the first true American general staff went into operation.⁵⁹

Carter's constant urgings, the reports of General Ludlow and the Ludlow Board, and the example of the Prussian general staff (seen by Root in Schwan's Report and The Brain of the Army) persuaded Root of the need for a general staff by the spring of 1902. Root realized that the Army War College alone could not administer the army; he decided to ask Congress for legislation in support of a general staff.⁶⁰ Root, with Carter's assistance, composed a bill for Congress in early 1902; the bill went before the committee on February 14, 1902. This bill proposed the combination of several War Department bureaus into one central supply department, the abolition of the Inspector General's Office, and the creation of a general staff to coordinate and control all War Department administration.⁶¹ Carter assisted Root in his dealings with the Senate.

and House Committees on Military Affairs through February and March. He acted as liaison officer, providing information on the bill to congressmen and answering their questions.⁶² The bill, despite opposition from several War Department bureau chiefs, was about to progress out of committee when the commanding general of the army, Nelson A. Miles, testified before the Senate Committee in March 1902.⁶³

Miles and Root had not cooperated in the administration of the War Department since the first days of Root's tenure. One of Miles's first acts after Root became secretary of war had been to reveal to the press some confidential information Root had given him. Root never trusted him again.⁶⁴ President Theodore Roosevelt also did not trust Miles; he once wrote Root that "in view of these facts, I think General Miles ought only to be employed when we are certain that whatever talents he may possess will be used under conditions which make his own interests and the interests of the country identical."⁶⁵ Apparently, the only reason Miles was not relieved from his post as commanding general was that he was due to be retired for age in 1903 and his relief by Roosevelt or Root would have raised too many objections in Congress, where Miles was very popular.⁶⁶

When Miles testified before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs on March 20, 1902, he clearly stated his reservations about the general staff proposals. His objections to the bill ranged from a belief that it would impede the efficiency of the War Department, an efficiency which he said was "the envy of all the allied troops [in the China expedition], especially those of Germany, where they have the imperial general staff corps," to his assertion that the general staff proposal was "but an effort to adopt and foster in a republican form of government

such as ours, a system peculiarly adapted to monarchies having immense standing armies. It would seem to Germanize and Russianize the small army of the United States."⁶⁷ Miles then quoted from Bronsart von Schellendorf the duties of a general staff; Miles believed that the War Department bureaus were as effective as any general staff, that they performed all of the duties assigned to a general staff by Bronsart, and that they did their mission within a system designed to operate in a republican form of government.⁶⁸

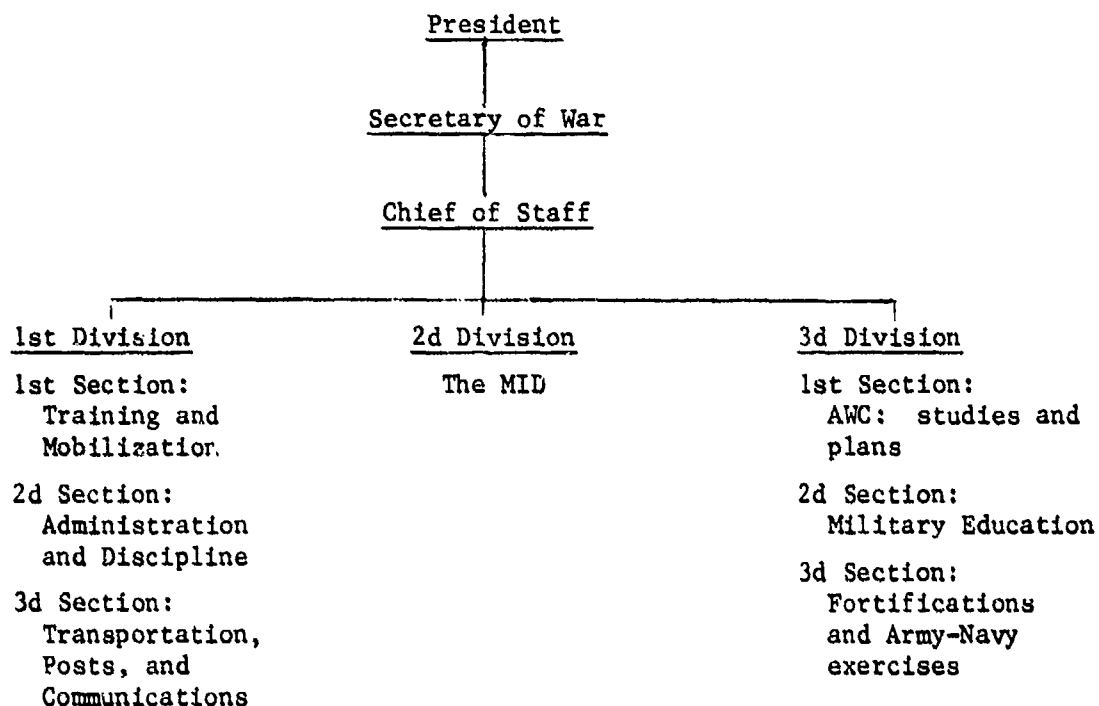
The Senate Committee took Miles's testimony to heart. The members of the committee felt that Miles's belief that the general staff bill would "Germanize" the American army was an accurate analysis of the bill. Their fears of "Germanization" were part of the distrust of Germany, and German institutions, which had been developing in the United States since the Samoan affair. The image of the militarized German state also raised the traditional American fear of large standing armies for the members of the committee. The day after Miles's testimony, the chairman of the Senate Committee told Carter that the general staff bill would not leave the committee that season.⁶⁹

Root embarked on a congressional education campaign in support of the bill in an effort to counter Miles's testimony. He asked retired Lieutenant General John M. Schofield (commanding general from 1888 to 1895) and Major General Wesley M. Merritt (a Civil War hero) to testify before the Senate Committee in support of the bill; they appeared before the senators in April 1902, and they managed to correct much of the damage done by Miles. Schofield admitted that the bill would "Germanize" the army when the senators quoted this phrase from Miles's testimony, but Schofield stated that "we might Germanize a little with advantage." He

attempted to remove any idea that the American army would become a monarchical force like the German army simply because it possessed a general staff; Schofield admitted that the German general staff was the model for the general staff proposal, but he refused to believe that the acceptance of the German ideas would harm the United States Army. General Merritt also supported the bill.⁷⁰ The committee no longer felt concern over the threats of "Germanization," but the bill still contained objectionable clauses, particularly the clause which would abolish the Inspector General's Office and consolidate the supply bureaus of the army; the committee refused to pass the bill without modifications.⁷¹

Root and Carter redrafted the bill over the summer of 1902. The new draft was much shorter and clearer; it did not call for the abolition of the Inspector General's Office nor did it consolidate all supply bureaus. Root, moreover, moved Miles out of Washington by sending him on an inspection trip to the Philippines and China.⁷² The new bill was placed before Congress in December 1902 and President Roosevelt publicly endorsed the proposals. With Miles in Asia, with the active support of the president, with the assistance of Schofield's testimony, and with the careful attention of Root and Carter to congressional objections to minor points of the new bill, the general staff law was passed by Congress and signed into law by Roosevelt on February 14, 1903. The bill passed Congress remarkably unchanged from its form in December; minor modifications were made to the wording of the act (most of the debate over the bill was over the precise language of the proposal) and General Fred C. Ainsworth managed to remove the abolition of his Bureau of Records and Pensions from the bill. To placate Miles, the general staff would not legally begin operations until August 15, 1903, seven days after Miles's mandatory retirement for age.⁷⁴

Table 5
The United States General Staff⁷⁵
(Bill of February 1903)



The American army finally had a general staff. The general staff created by the February 1903 bill consisted of a chief of staff, two other general officers, and forty-two junior officers. These men were responsible to the secretary of war, through the chief of staff, for the preparation of war plans, for the investigation of all questions on the efficiency of the army, for assisting the secretary of war as he desired, and "to perform such other duties not otherwise assigned by law as may be from time to time prescribed by the President."⁷⁶ The bill moved the Military Information Division from the Adjutant General's Office to the

general staff (where it became the entire 2d Division of the staff). The act also placed the chief of staff, but not the staff itself, in supervision of all the bureaus of the War Department; the chief of staff took control of those sections of the War Department formerly under the control of the commanding general, a post eliminated by the February 1903 general staff act.⁷⁷

The American general staff created in 1903 was the result of concern over the inefficient administration of the American army as demonstrated in the 1898 war with Spain, and the result of the observations of the Prussian military system conducted by Schwan, Ludlow, and others. Root's proposal for a general staff was based on his knowledge of the disastrous mismanagement of the Spanish-American War, on his familiarity with the reports on the Prussian staff system, and on his belief in "effectiveness and harmonious organization." He borrowed extensively from the Prussian system, primarily from information given to him by Ludlow in his private report. The American general staff system was, as General Nelson objected and as General Schofield freely admitted, an imitation of the Prussian general staff; the first several years of the American staff's existence saw a departure from this imitation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Cosmas, Army for Empire, pp. 70-87, 107; Matloff, American Military History, p. 324.
2. Matloff, American Military History, p. 324.
3. Cosmas, Army for Empire, pp. 93-95, 98, 190-111.
4. Ibid., p. 244.
5. Quoted in Nelson, National Security and the General Staff, p. 28.
6. Cosmas, Army for Empire, pp. 245-294, gives a full description of these problems.
7. James E. Hewes, From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963 (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military History, United States Army, 1975), pp. 6-7; George C. Reinhardt and William R. Kintner, The Haphazard Years: How America Has Gone to War (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 31-32; James W. Pohl, "The General Staff and American Military Policy: The Formative Period, 1898-1917" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1967), pp. 26-30.
8. Pohl, "General Staff," p. 33.
9. P. H. Colomb, "Cooperation between Army and Navy," reprinted in JMSIUS 23, no. 155 (September 1898): 280-309, from Aldershot Military Society Papers, not dated.
10. Graham A. Cosmas, "Military Reform after the Spanish-American War: The Army Reorganization Fight of 1898-1899," Military Affairs 35 (February 1971): 13-17.
11. William Addleman Ganoe, The History of the United States Army (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1924), p. 299.
12. Weigley, History, p. 312.
13. Ibid., p. 314; Hewes, Root to McNamara, p. 6; Philip C. Jessup, Elihu Root, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1938), 1:215-217.
14. Jessup, Elihu Root, pp. 218-219.

15. Speech of Elihu Root at a dinner for the general staff of the army, August 15, 1903, copy located in Henry C. Corbin Papers, USAMHRC; Karste, "Armed Progressives," p. 251.

16. Annual Report of the Secretary of War for 1899, quoted in Robert Bacon and James B. Scott, eds., The Military and Colonial Policy of the United States: Addresses and Reports by Elihu Root (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1924), pp. 356-358.

17. Jessup, Elihu Root, pp. 240-241; Pohl, "General Staff," p. 40; Hewes, Root to McNamara, p. 7; Speech of Henry C. Corbin delivered before the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, December 2, 1903, Corbin Papers, USAMHRC.

18. William C. Church to Elihu Root, August 14, 1899, Box 2, Elihu Root Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C. (hereafter this collection cited as Root Papers).

19. United States Army, Adjutant General's Office, Military Information Division, The Staffs of Various Armies (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, January 1899), pp. 1-10.

20. Brown, Armor of Organization, p. 198; U.S., Senate, Establishment of a General Staff Corps in the Army: Statements by the Secretary of War, 1902, p. 3.

21. Theodore Schwan to Henry C. Corbin, December 18, 1901, Corbin Papers, USAMHRC, p. 1.

22. Ibid., p. 2.

23. Samuel B. M. Young to George Henry, April 15, 1903, Letterbook October 1902-January 1904, S. B. M. Young Papers, USAMHRC; William H. Carter to Joseph P. Sanger, August 27, 1903, Document Nr. 440956 filed with Nr. 311224, Adjutant General's Office Correspondence and Despatches, Old Military Records Division Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (items filed with Document Nr. 311224 hereafter cited as f/w 311224).

24. MID, Staffs of Various Armies, p. 3; John L. Sutton, "The German General Staff in U.S. Defense Policy," Military Affairs 35 (Winter 1961-62): 198; Attaché report, January 2, 1892, Great Britain Box, Adjutant General's Office Correspondence and Despatches, Old Military Records Division Record Group 94, National Archives. Unfortunately for the historian, little proof of the activity between Root, his advisors, and the MID is available either in the archives or in manuscript collections. Most consultations among these men occurred in personal, unrecorded meetings. No desk calendars, diaries, or memoirs are explicit when dealing with these meetings. Reasonable interpretation based on the evidence which is available must be the historian's guide.

25. MID, Staffs of Various Armies, p. 7.

26. Ibid., pp. 8-11.
27. Ibid., p. 11.
28. Annual Report of Secretary of War for 1899, from Bacon, Military and Colonial Policy, pp. 351-352.
29. Ibid., pp. 353-356.
30. Ibid., pp. 356-357.
31. Ibid., p. 357. Root acknowledged this perception of the AWC in his testimony before the House Committee on Military Affairs on December 2, 1902; U.S. Senate, Establishment, p. 24.
32. Jessup, Elihu Root, p. 225.
33. Cosmas, Army for Empire, pp. 63-64; Pohl, "General Staff," pp. 58-59.
34. Henry C. Corbin to the Assistant Adjutant General, September 25, 1902, Document Nr. 427108, Adjutant General's Office Correspondence and Despatches, Old Military Records Division Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
35. Cullum, Biographical Register, 3:235; William H. Carter's papers are available at the Library of Congress but they contain nothing of value for his years in Washington. William Harding Carter Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.
36. William H. Carter to Elihu Root, December 20, 1900, Root Papers.
37. U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff: Personal Narrative of the General Staff System of the American Army by Major General William Harding Carter, S. Doc. 119, 68th Cong., 1st sess., 1924, p. 2; Powe, Emergence of War Department Intelligence Agency, p. 39.
38. William H. Carter to Elihu Root, June 17, 1901, Root Papers.
39. Elihu Root, "Address at the laying of the Army War College Building Cornerstone, February 21, 1903," in Bacon, Military and Colonial Policy, p. 125; Jessup, Elihu Root, pp. 242-243; Ambrose, Upton, p. 155, and others believe Upton was a great influence on Root, but the evidence does not support this.
40. Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, Special Order No. 42, February 19, 1900.
41. General Ludlow's presence on the board was not due to any particular qualifications for the job (though he had been military attaché in London in the mid-1890s); his appointment was due to his problems with Major General Leonard Wood in Cuba. Ludlow was Wood's

subordinate, but their personal animosity was making newspaper headlines in January 1900. Root solved this problem by ordering Ludlow out of Cuba to head up the board of officers concerned with organizing the AWC. See Jack C. Lane, Armed Progressive: General Leonard Wood (San Rafael, Cal.: Presidio Press, 1978), p. 87; William Ludlow to Elihu Root, November 10, 1899, January 29, 1900, February 5, 1900, and Elihu Root to William Ludlow, February 1, 1900, all in Elihu Root Papers.

42. Assistant Adjutant General to William Ludlow, July 3, 1900, Document Nr. 440956 f/w 311224, RG 94, NARC; Joseph P. Sanger to Elihu Root, October 18, 1900, Root Papers; Henry C. Corbin to Collector of the Port of New York, October 9, 1900, Root Papers.

43. William Ludlow to Adjutant General, July 29, 1900, reporting a conference with Colonel Sanger in London, Document Nr. 440956 f/w 311224, RG 94, NARC.

44. William Ludlow, "Principles and Practical Methods, Pursued Organizations, Training, and Administration of the German and other Armies of Europe" (typewritten manuscript, dated 1901, copies available at USAMHRC).

45. Scammell, "Spencer Wilkinson," pp. 130-131; Pohl, "General Staff," p. 57.

46. Ludlow Board Report, October 31, 1900, Document Nr. 311224, RG 94, NARC.

47. Ibid.

48. William H. Carter, "War College," July 8, 1900, Document Nr. 311224, RG 94, NARC.

49. Ludlow Board Report, October 31, 1900, Document Nr. 311224, RG 94, NARC.

50. William H. Carter to Joseph P. Sanger, August 27, 1903, Document Nr. 440956 f/w 311224, RG 94, NARC. (Hereafter cited as "Carter Memo.")

51. Ibid., p. 1.

52. Ludlow, "Principles and Practical Methods," p. 180.

53. Ibid., p. 182.

54. Scammell, "Spencer Wilkinson," pp. 130-131; Huntington, Soldier and State, p. 251; Jessup, Elihu Root, p. 241; Pohl, "General Staff," p. 51, n. 30.

55. U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff, pp. 9-11.

56. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, pp. 176-177.
57. Ibid., p. 177; Palmer, Bliss, pp. 80-81.
58. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, p. 177; S. B. M. Young to Rev. Dr. J. A. Snodgrass, January 6, 1903, S. B. M. Young Papers, USAMHRC; William H. Carter to Elihu Root, October 30, 1902, Root Papers.
59. George P. Ahern, "A Chronicle of the Army War College: 1899-1919" (Washington, D.C.: Privately Printed, July 24, 1919), pp. 13-17. Copy of this is available in the National War College Library, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.
60. Huntington, Soldier and State, p. 247. Root wanted to press for a general staff bill in late 1900, but McKinley advised him to drop the matter until later; U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff, p. 4.
61. Hewes, Root to McNamara, pp. 9-11; Nelson, General Staff, p. 51; U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff, pp. 22-24.
62. Carter Memo, pp. 5-6.
63. Pohl, "General Staff," p. 48; Jessup, Elihu Root, p. 251.
64. Jessup, Elihu Root, pp. 244-245.
65. Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, March 7, 1902, marked "Private and Confidential," Root Papers.
66. Virginia Weisel Johnson, The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), pp. 350-355.
67. U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Statement of General Nelson A. Miles, Commanding General of the American Army, 1902, pp. 35-37.
68. Ibid., pp. 36-37.
69. U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff, p. 35.
70. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Statements of Generals John M. Schofield and Wesley M. Merritt before the Military Affairs Committee of the United States Senate, April 9, 1902, pp. 93-95; Stohlman, Powerless Position, p. 119; Weigley, Towards, pp. 174-176.
71. Stohlman, Powerless Position, p. 119.
72. Miles, Serving the Republic, p. 306; U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff, pp. 43-46.

73. William H. Carter to Elihu Root, December 23, 1902, Root Papers; Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, August 24, 1903, Root Papers; Jessup, Elihu Root, p. 229.

74. Nelson, General Staff, p. 59; Johnson, Unregimented General, pp. 358-359; U.S., Congress, Senate, Creation of the American General Staff, pp. 45-50.

75. U.S. War Department, General Staff, "History of the General Staff and Organization Charts" (typewritten manuscript, dated 1929, copy located at USAMHRC), chart nr. 1.

76. Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, General Orders Nr. 15, February 18, 1903, sections 2-3.

77. Ibid., section 4.

CHAPTER 5

THE AMERICAN GENERAL STAFF AND PRUSSIAN INFLUENCE, 1903-1918

The American military reformers whose efforts culminated in the passage of the General Staff Bill in February 1903 acknowledged their use of the Prussian general staff system as a model for the formation of their staff system. This chapter discusses the development of the American general staff from 1903 through 1918 and compares it to the Prussian staff. The chapter concludes with a description of the drastic reforms of the American War Department general staff in 1918 and with a description of the development of the American Expeditionary Force general staff (which was formed in imitation of the French and British staff systems).

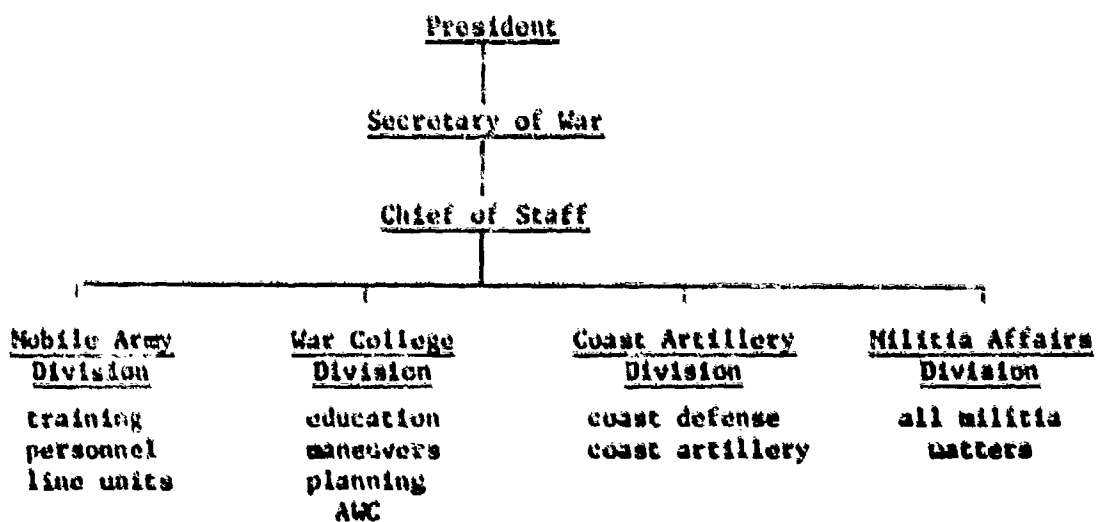
Two problems prevented the American general staff from functioning effectively until 1918. The first problem was the absence of a significant military threat to stimulate development of the general staff; the second was the continued power of the War Department bureau chiefs, a power due in part to the inexperience of the American general staff officers as administrators and supervisors.¹ Until 1917, there was little need to prepare for war, apart from the minor Mexican border problems, and the War Department bureau chiefs, especially Fred C. Ainsworth (as we shall see below) refused supervision by the general

staff officers, most of whom were their juniors in rank and experience.² In its first eight years the general staff had only one success: planning and executing the occupation of Cuba in 1906 by several thousand troops.³ Otherwise, the American general staff was afloat in a sea of administrative trivia. When Major General Leonard Wood became chief of staff in 1910, he found the staff officers more concerned with toilet paper issue than with planning for war.⁴

General Wood's appointment as chief of staff did bring a slight improvement to staff procedures and the first tentative steps toward active supervision of the War Department bureaus by the general staff. These improvements were embodied in the reorganization of the general staff shown in table 6; this reorganization brought the entire force of army troop units under the direct control of the Mobile Army Division

Table 6

United States General Staff, 1910-1911: Wood's Reorganization⁵



of the staff. The reorganization clarified the separation of the planning functions of the War College Division from the training and personnel tasks of the Mobile Army Division. The struggle for control between the bureau chiefs and the chief of staff (which was the continuation of the struggles between the bureau chiefs and the commanding general since 1865) was partially settled in 1911 when Major General Fred C. Ainsworth, the adjutant general, was retired for insubordination to Wood. The insubordination occurred when Wood, as chief of staff, attempted to alter the administration of Ainsworth's bureau; Ainsworth objected, action typical of most bureau chiefs, but he objected too forcefully for Wood. Wood demanded his court martial; Ainsworth was instead allowed to retire.⁶ This embarrassment of the most powerful bureau chief, which took place in 1911, established the subordination of every other bureau chief to the chief of staff.⁷

Despite Wood's reorganization of the general staff and his victory over Ainsworth, the general staff continued to be hampered by inexperienced staff officers and by a lack of interest in the general staff activities on the part of the general public, Congress, and Presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson.⁸ Ironically, this apathy reached its height during the first three years of World War I, and during the Preparedness Debate.

One result of the congressional apathy of this period, an apathy which did not allow for any constructive military developments, was the passage of the 1916 National Defense Act. This act, a compromise between the proposals of the general staff and the desires of the peace advocates in Congress, severely limited the actions of the general staff. According to the provisions of the bill, the general staff was increased to three

generals and fifty-two junior officers, but only half of these officers could serve in the War Department general staff at any one time.⁹ This effectively cut the strength of the general staff to twenty officers. The bill, which had initially been proposed in a much different form by the general staff (with the support of President Wilson, support which did not survive political pressures from the congressional isolationists), also stipulated that the general staff could only be involved in purely military matters; it could not engage in any coordination or supervision of the administrative functions of the War Department bureaus. Secretary of War Newton Baker refused to comply with these restrictions; he continued to hold the chief of staff personally responsible for all War Department administration.¹⁰

The civilian control of the American general staff, exercised through the civilian president and secretary of war, was different than the monarchical control exercised by the Prussian king. The American secretary of war was a cabinet-level official, appointed by the president subject to the approval of the Senate. He could be removed by the president, as could the chief of staff. Additionally, the appointment of the chief of staff ended the day after the inauguration of a new president. The new president was thus able to name his own secretary of war and chief of staff. The president and the secretary of war could, and did, exert extensive control over the daily functioning of the general staff as well. This involvement was greatest when Wilson was president. For example, in the fall of 1915, Wilson ordered Secretary of War Henry Breckinridge to fire all general staff officers if any preparations for war with Germany were in progress (an order Breckinridge wisely ignored).¹¹

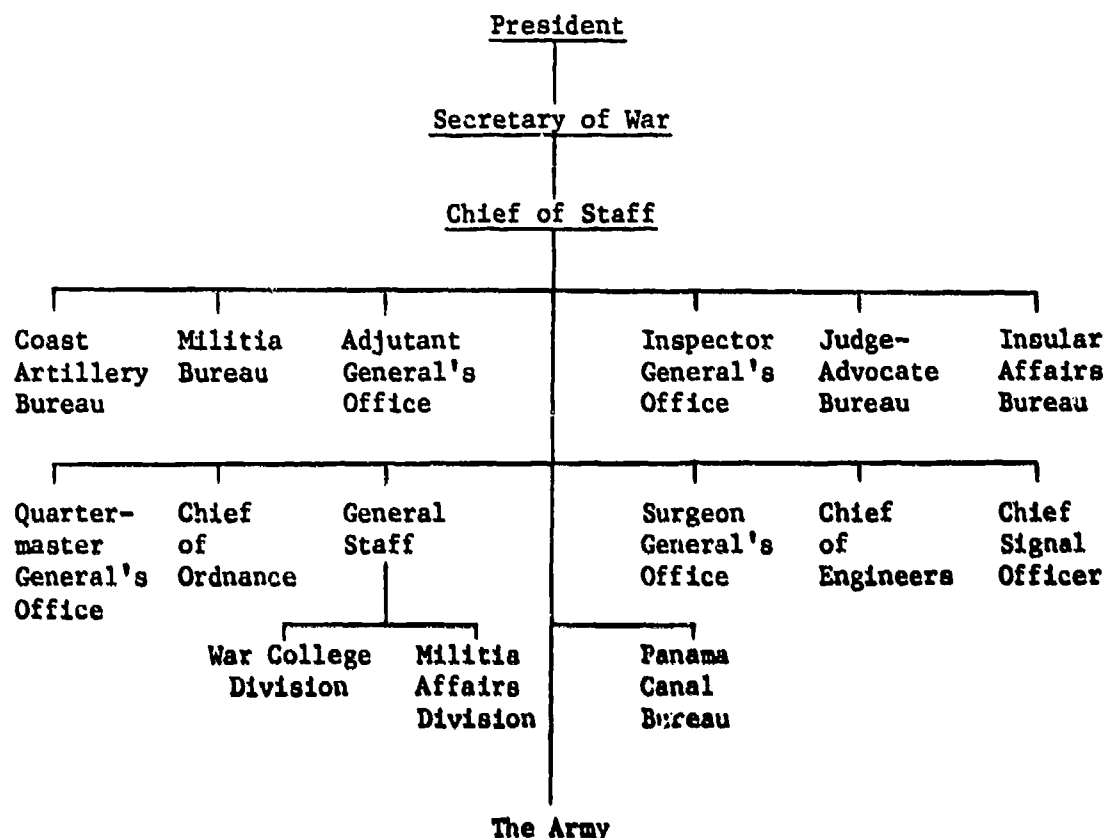
Wilson's interference with the lawful duties of the general staff was not the greatest problem faced by the staff before America's entry into World War I. Rather, congressional control, and interference with, the staff was even stronger than that of the president and secretary of war. This power of the American Congress was without a parallel in the Prussian civil-military system. In 1903, congressional approval had been required for the creation of the general staff; each year after 1903, the chief of staff was required to testify before the Military Affairs Committees of the Senate and the House on the costs, activities, personnel, and future plans of the general staff, the War Department, and the army. In 1912, Congress reduced the number of general staff officers from forty-five to thirty-six, and, as noted above, in 1916, the National Defense Act passed by Congress (with the endorsement of Wilson) placed further restrictions on the general staff.¹² Some congressmen attempted to reduce or even abolish the general staff on other occasions from 1904 through 1917; these attempts were defeated through extensive lobbying efforts by the secretaries of war and by influential general staff officers.¹³

The legislative interest in reducing the size and power of the general staff resulted from three distinct causes: the influence of important army officers who were against the general staff concept (notably Ainsworth); the fears of "Germanization" of the American army through the use of a general staff; and the general apathy and pacifism of the Congress during the years before World War I. Ainsworth's involvement, like the involvement of several other ex-bureau chiefs, was only a minor cause of the congressional interference, although his actions as an advisor to several powerful congressmen during the debate over

the 1916 National Defense Act assisted in the creation of the anti-general staff provisions of that act. The congressional fears of "Germanization" were also a minor cause of the congressional interest; most congressmen understood that the American general staff was copied, in part, from the Prussian system, but they also understood the different forms of control used in the United States Army. Most congressmen did not actively fear a "Germanization" or "Prussianization" of the American army. The most important motivation for the congressional attempts to limit the power of the general staff was the general pacifism of the Congress. Congress, aware of the incredible suffering of the European powers after 1914, did not desire a war if any alternatives were available; their efforts to limit the American general staff were based on their fears of an aggressive and large standing army and officer corps. The concept of America as a pacifistic and peaceful nation, a nation without the need to provide for war, only changed after the April 6, 1917 declaration of war against Germany. Until then, only a combination of intensive lobbying efforts by supporters of the general staff and a generally perceived weakness of the general staff actually in existence kept the American general staff from destruction between 1903 and 1917.¹⁴

The general staff nevertheless managed to survive and came to occupy a position within army administration similar to that of the Prussian Grosser Generalstab. Both chiefs of staff were legally empowered to coordinate all military activities; before 1914 and 1918 respectively, the Prussian and American chiefs of staff were unable to do this.¹⁵ The American general staff failed to provide this supervision because the bureau chiefs, who were legally subordinate to the chief of staff after 1903, refused to respect his authority. The retirement of

Table 7
United States War Department, April 6, 1917¹⁶



Ainsworth in 1911 increased the theoretical power of the chief of staff, but the general staff was not organized to supervise and coordinate the entire army (see table 7).¹⁷ The bureaus, especially the most powerful Adjutant General's Office, the Inspector General's Office, and the Judge Advocate General, retained a practical freedom from the supervision of the general staff due to the weakness of the general staff (never more than forty officers in Washington from 1903 through 1917) and due to the organization of the War Department. The bureaus (manned by an average

of two hundred officers) were directly subordinate to the chief of staff, not to the officers of the general staff. General staff officers ordered to supervise the activities of the bureaus were required to report to the chief of staff who then ordered the bureau chiefs to comply with the supervisory requests of the general staff officer. This cumbersome system, which required the chief of staff's personal involvement in every situation, no matter how trivial, effectively removed the bureaus from any active supervision and control by the general staff.¹⁸ Nineteen general staff officers were available in Washington in 1916 to supervise and coordinate all War Department activities, as well as perform the planning and educational missions of the staff.¹⁹

A minor reform of the clumsy and inefficient bureau system during this period came with the consolidation of the Quartermaster, Commissary, and Pay Bureaus in a Quartermaster General's Office in 1912. The bureau system, despite this minor reform, and the legal authority of the chief of staff, remained as inefficient in 1916 as it had been in 1897.²⁰ By early 1917, according to two historians of the American general staff, the staff found itself overly involved in the administrative trivia of army administration and in problems of attempted coordination of the War Department bureaus;²¹ it "confined itself almost exclusively to formulating general policies and left the execution to the troop units and to the bureaus."²²

Both the Prussian and American staffs failed to control and coordinate all military administration. The American staff did coordinate more effectively than the Prussian system in several areas. One of these areas was army-navy cooperation; the American relative effectiveness was due, in part, to the greater American reliance on a navy as the primary

means of national defense. American army-navy cooperation included the formation, in the summer of 1903, of a Joint Army and Navy Board which operated effectively for several years (an organization unknown to the Prussian and German systems). In 1907, a controversy developed over the location of a naval base in the Philippines; this dispute severely hampered army-navy cooperation until 1910, when the matter was settled, to no one's satisfaction, by adopting Pearl Harbor as the primary American naval base in the Pacific Ocean.²³ Despite this problem, the Joint Board managed to plan, and supervise, periodic army-navy maneuvers, the first held in 1905, and it also established a system for the coordination of the army and navy war planning agencies.²⁴ The American navy's planning group was the General Board, which from 1903 to 1917 was also the major American war planning agency since all well-developed war plans concerned a naval defense of the United States. The plans of the Army War College and of the general staff for use against Mexico were the only exceptions to this; the American war plans against Japan (Plan Orange) and against Germany (Plan Black) were primarily naval operations.²⁵ The civil leadership in Washington recognized the primacy of the navy, and the general staff's influence on American strategy was very slight; the same cannot, of course, be said of Germany and the Prussian general staff war plans.²⁶

American general staff officers enjoyed only a slight influence on American strategic policy from 1903 to 1917; their influence within the army itself was also limited. This limited internal influence was due to the small number of officers serving on the staff and to the inexperience of these officers. Yet these officers, and their compatriots who had attended the army service schools at Leavenworth and the AWC,

became important members of the successful American involvement in the First World War. This can be explained by the increasing emphasis from 1903 through 1917 on officer postgraduate education (by 1917 nearly 10 percent of all American field-grade officers had graduated from either Leavenworth or the AWC).²⁷

These officers, unlike their Prussian counterparts, were not chosen through a lengthy and well-organized selection process. To quote from a lecture in staff duties delivered to an officer class at Fort Leavenworth in 1904, "we have in our army a mixed system of selection for the staff."²⁸ The American selection process was in fact not a process at all. Selection procedures were used to screen applicants for the Army School of the Line and Army Staff College, both at Fort Leavenworth, and for applicants for the Army War College, but entry into the general staff itself was not based on graduation from any of these schools, or for that matter, on any established criteria whatsoever. Appointment to the general staff was decided upon by a board of five general officers, two of whom were members of the general staff. This board appointed officers "solely on their professional efficiency, on their probable aptitude, and fitness for general staff service."²⁹ Selected officers served with the general staff, and wore the black braid of an American general staff officer, for a four-year detail. They were then required by law to return to their line branch for at least two years. Officers could be redetailed to the staff, but there was no set career pattern for American general staff officers.³⁰ Unlike the Prussian staff officers, an American officer detailed to the general staff continued to think of himself as an infantry, cavalry, or artillery officer and not as a general staff officer. When reassigned out of the staff, the American officer once

again wore the standard uniform of his branch; the Prussian general staff officer continued to wear the carmine trouser stripes, even when serving with line units.³¹

Theodore Schwan, in a prophetic address delivered before the officers chosen to become members of the general staff in May 1903, decried the lack of an officer selection system. He stated that he had recommended the adoption of an examination system similar to that used in Prussia, but that Root had decided against this. Schwan believed that the adoption of such a system would, despite Root's desires for a large body of trained officers (which was in response to a need discussed below), have produced much better results.³² Chief of Staff S. B. M. Young saw the difficulties presented by the American selection system, but he felt that until the officer postgraduate education system "reached a maturer development," a board of officers was the only feasible selection process.³³ The American general staff did not have sufficient time for its educational system to mature before the First World War forced the creation of a much larger staff system; if time had allowed, the American general staff would have required graduation from the Staff College as a prerequisite for entrance into the general staff corps. Movement toward this reform was under way when the pressing problems of Mexico and the European war shunted them aside.³⁴

The American general staff officer, through the officer selection and education system, was prepared for a different function than the Prussian officer. Unlike the Kriegsakademie, which had the sole function of training officers for semipermanent assignment as general staff officers, American military education prepared officers for many different assignments, including positions in wartime many ranks above their

peacetime rank.³⁵ American officers, especially West Point graduates, were better educated than their Prussian peers; education at the advanced schools at Leavenworth and at the Army War College was designed to make these officers proficient in duties which they would probably perform only in wartime, after the small American regular army had been expanded many fold to meet the war emergency.³⁶ The American army recognized the need to provide, as one officer wrote, "the organized mediocrity which is the basis of all staff corps," but it also recognized that in a large modern war the American land forces would expand four or five fold.³⁷ The American army had to train many more officers to be high-echelon staff officers and commanders than its peacetime officer corps could ever contain. The Prussian army relied on its regular officers' performing the same, or similar, functions in war and peace.³⁸

The schools which provided the necessary education in staff and command duties for American army officers were naturally unable, in the fifteen years from 1903 to 1917, to provide sufficient officers to fill every general staff position in wartime.³⁹ Despite the shortage of graduates of these schools, the officers who did manage to attend the schools before 1917 filled some of the most responsible positions in the military. Their influence on the army, and its ability to effectively wage war against Germany in late 1917, was acknowledged by, among others, General John J. (Black Jack) Pershing in an address he gave to the Army War College in September 1924. He said:

During the World War, the graduates of Leavenworth and the War College held the most responsible positions in our army and in my opinion, had it not been for these officers trained at these schools, the tremendous problems of combat, supply, and transportation could not have been solved.⁴⁰

These schools were also the American army institutions which borrowed the most from the Prussian army in the years between 1903 and 1917.

The Leavenworth schools, the Army School of the Line and the Army Staff College, were the American equivalents of the Prussian Kriegsakademie; the Army War College was less an educational institution than a college of officers brought together to plan for war.⁴¹ The Leavenworth schools were the primary staff training facilities of the American army before the First World War. The Army School of the Line (known as the Infantry and Cavalry School before 1908) was the basic postgraduate education for infantry, cavalry, and artillery officers of the American army.⁴² Officers were selected to attend the School of the Line by the regimental commanders of each infantry, cavalry, and artillery regiment in the Western Hemisphere. Each regiment sent one captain, of not less than five years' service as an officer, to each annual class; every officer was required to pass a physical exam, but no scholastic entrance examination was used.⁴³

The Army School of the Line course lasted one year, with classes in military art, military engineering, military law, and Spanish.⁴⁴ The students were required to pass each subject with a minimum 75 percent score on each exam and practical exercise. Retesting was possible on written tests, but only the first performance on practical exercises was graded.⁴⁵ With the exception of the class of 1902/3, the first post-Spanish-American War class to attend the school, few student officers failed the course; most students made marks in the eightieth and ninetieth percentiles.⁴⁶ The curriculum emphasized military instruction--the Department of Military Art held slightly less than half of all classes, the Department of Military Engineering accounted for 30 percent,

and Spanish and Law split the remaining 20 percent evenly.⁴⁷

The teaching method employed, and many of the texts used by the school, were borrowed from similar methods and texts in use at the Kriegsakademie.⁴⁸ The knowledge of the Prussian methods, and copies of the texts, came from several sources, including Arthur L. Wagner, who toured Germany in the late 1880s and who, while an instructor at Leavenworth, helped to create a copy of the Prussian staff college in Kansas.⁴⁹ Other sources included the American military attachés in Berlin who corresponded with the faculty at Leavenworth, the works of Captain Farrand Sayre (an instructor at Leavenworth) on war games and the Prussian method of instruction, and from other interested army officers.⁵⁰ As Timothy Nenninger, the ablest historian of the Leavenworth schools, states:

The Leavenworth ideas came from foreign armies, particularly the German. . . . Foreign influence was pervasive in the establishment, evolution, organization, and instruction of the Leavenworth schools . . . its roots, instruction techniques, and to a limited extent, doctrine, were European.⁵¹

Texts were one aspect of the imitation of the Kriegsakademie by the Leavenworth faculty. A Prussian military text, Griepenkerl's Letters on Applied Tactics, served as both the model for the system of tactical instruction at the School of the Line and Staff College, and as a standard text in both schools.⁵² Another Prussian text, by Verdy du Vernois, was used as the basic text for Staff College instruction on war games.⁵³ A book by von der Goltz was the text for all classes in the conduct of war at both schools; Bronsart von Schellendorf's The Duties of the General Staff was both schools' text for their classes on general staff duties.⁵⁴ Schwan's Report on the German army and Wilkinson's The Brain of an Army were also used in the coursework and lectures at the Kansas schools.⁵⁵

The use of war games, map problems, and staff rides, all consciously borrowed from the applied method in use at the Kriegsakademie, was characteristic of the Leavenworth instruction. The director of the Military Art Department wrote:

The method of instruction [in use at Leavenworth] is known as the applicatory or applied method, and is the best yet devised for teaching the art of war in time of peace. It comes from the Germans who have evolved it from many years of experience and study. Its great value lies in the fact that it makes a man master of his own knowledge and skill. In other words, it produces practical men.⁵⁶

Practical exercises, including war games and staff rides, accounted for well over half of all class time, and much emphasis was placed on the student's performance in these exercises.⁵⁷

The reliance on Prussian texts was seen as disadvantageous by some American officers. By 1907, the commandant of the School of the Line had begun a program to create an "American Griepenkerl" because he believed, "notwithstanding the recognized value of the present translations of Griepenkerl's Letters, it is plain that if such a work were based upon American maps, with American names and our army organizations, its value would be greatly enhanced."⁵⁸ Captain Sayre, using German references and reports from the attachés in Europe, had already produced a book on map maneuvers and war games for American officers by 1907.⁵⁹ In this book, Sayre explained the problems with the British method of instruction and he recommended, and used, the Prussian system instead.⁶⁰

Officers who graduated from the School of the Line (approximately 95 percent of those who began the course in the years from 1903 to 1917 completed the course) were ranked according to their performance in both the applied method instruction and in theoretical instruction. The top

five officers (from an average class size of sixty officers) were listed as honor graduates; the officers who ranked sixth through eighteenth were named distinguished graduates. These officers were then permitted, if they volunteered, to stay an additional year at Leavenworth to attend the Army Staff College.⁶¹ The curriculum and methods of instruction at the Staff College were similar to those used at the School of the Line.⁶² The situations and map problems were more complex, and they dealt with larger-size units, but the reliance on practical instruction continued.⁶³

Graduates of the Staff College were not tested or examined during their year at the college; they graduated in strictly alphabetical order, with no ranking according to ability. The graduates were ordered to troop duty assignments, or to assignment in Washington, but there was no provision for the direct assignment of graduates of the Staff College as general staff officers.⁶⁴ The absence of a direct link between the Staff College and the general staff was recognized by several American army officers, including J. Franklin Bell (chief of staff 1906-1910). Bell attempted unsuccessfully to implement a direct relationship between the Staff College and the staff; the most effective reform he was able to accomplish was to give his personal attention to the careers of the best graduates of the Leavenworth schools.⁶⁵ He, and his successors, were unable to coordinate the efficient postgraduate education system with the American general staff.

The institution best suited to fulfill this function of coordination of education and utilization was the Army War College, but the AWC failed to perform this function. Part of this failure was due to the ambiguous nature of the War College's mission. Root had initially wanted the AWC to, as he said, "do the thinking for the army, not the mere

administration"; he later made the War College the section of the general staff most closely concerned with the daily operation (and administration) of the army.⁶⁶ Tasker H. Bliss added to the confusion about the War College's function by making two contradictory recommendations in his November 1903 report as president of the AWC. Bliss recommended that the AWC eliminate its military intelligence functions as these were general staff functions, at the same time that the AWC should increase its control over operational and strategic planning. He also requested that more student officers be assigned to the college to become, through the use of practical exercises, familiar with their likely duties in wartime.⁶⁷ In 1917, the dispute between the advocates of the AWC as an educational institution and those who advocated it as a planning and coordinating body was still in progress.⁶⁸

The officers selected to attend the AWC as students, or more precisely, as "temporary personnel," had volunteered for the assignment and had been personally appointed by the president of the AWC, the second highest ranking general staff officer in the army. Officers who had graduated from the Staff College were not required to take an entrance examination; officers who wanted to be appointed, but who had not gone to the Staff College, had to complete an examination in the spring of the year they desired to attend the AWC.⁶⁹ The test papers, based on information published in army General Orders and on questions provided by mail from the AWC, were reviewed by the president of the AWC. The 1917 test, similar to all the tests given before the First World War, required the solution of four map problems and the composition of an original research project based on a specified topic. All applicants required to take the exam were given the same questions.⁷⁰ (The 1914

test order recommended that prospective examinees study Griepenkerl's Letters on Applied Tactics before taking the test.)⁷¹ Officers could apply if they were senior captains or field-grade officers. Junior captains were generally excluded, although it was admitted by at least one officer involved in the selection of students that junior captains already were functioning effectively in the general staff.⁷² The AWC president recommended a maximum of thirty officers each year for admission to the school. The final choice of students was the decision of the chief of staff.⁷³

The course at the AWC consisted almost entirely of practical exercises, and of creating war plans and mobilization procedures for the actual general staff officers on duty with the War College Division. Usually only ten or twelve lectures were given during an entire academic year.⁷⁴ No examinations were held, and the officers were never graded on their work. The value of the education at the War College was doubted by some of the students; some students even wondered if the general staff officers paid any attention to the students' work on the war and operations plans.⁷⁵ The instructors at the AWC maintained contact with the American military attachés in Europe, and much of the coursework was based on material received from the attachés.⁷⁶ The course concluded with a month-long general staff ride over the American Civil War battlefields of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia; at the completion of the staff ride the students were assigned as umpires at the annual maneuvers of the army or the national guard.⁷⁷

The Army War College, initially designed to serve as an interim general staff, after the creation of the general staff in 1903 was given the mission of training officers and preparing plans for mobilization

and war. It is doubtful whether the AWC ever effectively functioned as a planning organization. The general staff officers distrusted the work of the students (or temporary personnel) at the War College and there is some doubt that any of the AWC war plans were ever seriously considered as viable plans by the general staff. The only lasting effect of the AWC courses from 1904 to 1917 was the familiarization of many senior officers with the applied method of instruction and with some new ideas in warfare. Graduation from the AWC, significantly, was neither a prerequisite for assignment to the general staff nor a guarantor of such an assignment in the future.⁷⁸

The officers who were assigned to the general staff, officers appointed from the army at large without official educational requirements, were given assignments either with the War Department general staff or with "general staff with troops" detachments scattered throughout the army.⁷⁹ Duty with the central staff in Washington involved administration and coordination with the War Department or, more likely, involvement with the strategical and operational planning of the general staff. The supervisory function of the chief of staff, provided in the act of February 14, 1903, and endorsed periodically to 1917, was not the primary function of the American general staff officer;⁸⁰ difficulties posed by the intransigence of the bureau chiefs, and the sheer bulk of the work to be done by so few officers, prevented the successful supervision and control by the general staff of the bureaus in the War Department.⁸¹ Instead, most general staff officers were employed at the Army War College Division offices at Washington Barracks (now Fort McNair), several miles from the War Department headquarters located in what is now the Executive Office Building.⁸²

These officers, the majority of all general staff officers assigned to Washington, planned for the strategic and tactical deployment, equipment, concentration, and most importantly for the American army, for the mobilization and utilization of American manpower in time of war. They were also responsible for the education of the "temporary personnel" at the AWC, for supervision of all officer education in the army, for the analysis, compilation, and dissemination of military information, and for the regulation and supervision of the annual army-national guard maneuvers and the periodic army-navy maneuvers as well.⁸³ This planning and supervision for the line army was the primary function of the American general staff from 1903 to 1917. Most war plans were drawn up for operations in the Western Hemisphere in defense of the Monroe Doctrine or for actions against the Mexican insurgents; war plans were also prepared for possible wars with Japan and Germany. The vast bulk of general staff planning for war was concerned with the problems of the mobilization and utilization of American manpower in time of national emergency.⁸⁴

In 1912, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson ordered the general staff to update their plans for the mobilization and utilization of America's manpower. The general staff did little that year except create a plan for manning a large wartime army. The problem of manning such an army surfaced again in 1915 when the staff spent most of the year preparing another plan for manpower mobilization. The 1915 effort, involving a comprehensive revision of the 1912 Stimson plan, culminated in the publication of A Statement of a Proper Military Policy for the United States. This Statement addressed all of the major problems of the American military, but it emphasized the difficulties involved with manning a large army in time of war.⁸⁵

Before the advent of the Mexican and European difficulties, the American general staff had demonstrated its capabilities in the rapid and efficient occupation of Cuba in 1906.⁸⁶ By late 1916, the American general staff was effectively eliminated as a functioning organization. The Mexican border difficulties, the Preparedness Debate (which had resulted in the disastrous National Defense Act of 1916), and especially the reduction in the number of general staff officers assigned to Washington all account for the American general staff's lack of power. In 1916, with only nineteen general staff officers on duty in Washington (the thirty-odd officers at the AWC were involved in war planning work, but the quality of their work, and the use made of their studies by the general staff officers, is questionable), the collection of military intelligence, had, in the words of Marc Powe, "reached a nadir," and the staff was so "bogged down in parochial military detail" that it was totally ineffective.⁸⁷ Even the strategic planning of the staff, according to J. A. S. Grenville, was "light years removed from a genuine or sophisticated understanding of international affairs."⁸⁸ Richard D. Challener has pointed out that "not even a rough plan existed [in 1916] for sending an American expeditionary force to Europe."⁸⁹

The organization of the general staff itself failed to meet either the demands of peacetime preparation for war or the rigors of war itself. The Wood reorganization of the staff had been a step towards development of an effective organization, but its effectiveness was restricted by the interference of Congress and by the lack of sufficient general staff officers to utilize the organization. Unlike the Prussian Grosser Generalstab, which was organized as a flexible structure able to respond to alterations in mission or personnel, the American general staff

organization was fixed by Congress, and was stagnated by the refusal of Congress to listen to the appeals of the general staff for a more effective organization.⁹⁰ For example, the 1916 National Defense Act, despite the vigorous protests of the staff officers, altered the general staff organization by eliminating the Mobile Army and Coast Artillery Divisions. This act passed by the whim of Congress, ignoring the pleas of the officers who were forced to work in an organization they did not want.

As it existed from 1916 to 1918, the American general staff consisted of only two divisions, each under a general officer--the Division of Militia Affairs and the Army War College Division.⁹¹ The relatively effective four-division organization of Leonard Wood had been barely able to deal with the problems facing the staff; the 1916 congressional reorganization eliminated any chance of effective organization for the general staff, for legally the only officers who could work in the War, Navy, and State Building (now the Executive Office Building) were the chief of staff, his aides, and the officers assigned to the Division of Militia Affairs. The entire War College Division, some eleven of the nineteen officers in the Washington, D.C., general staff of 1916, was at Washington Barracks, and only one automobile was available for liaison.⁹²

The War College Division was divided into two sections--the Army War College and a subsidiary section responsible for military intelligence, the maintenance of the general staff library, and the supervision of maneuvers. All operational planning was conducted by the AWC.⁹³ With the 1916 reorganization, the head of the War College Division, the second senior officer in the general staff, became the de facto head of the staff. The chief of staff, with his office in the War, Navy, and

State Building, began to lose control of the functions of the War College Division located several miles away.⁹⁴ By 1917, the general staff organization had almost returned to its status in 1902, when the AWC was functioning as a pre-general staff planning organization.⁹⁵ In 1917, the eleven officers of the War College Division were also responsible for the education of the thirty student officers attending the War College, as well as the other work previously described. It is hardly surprising that little effective work was accomplished. In April 1917, for example, two officers and two civilian clerks were responsible for all military intelligence duties of the staff, as well as instruction at the AWC in intelligence. By contrast, in November 1918, there were over 280 officers and nearly 1,000 uniformed and civilian assistants at work, in Washington alone, on the general staff military intelligence duties.⁹⁶

The gravest problem for the general staff from 1903 to 1918 was this shortage of staff officers. The missions of planning for war, collecting military intelligence, supervising officer education and troop maneuvers, and of coordinating and supervising all army activities were far beyond the abilities of nineteen officers. Chief of Staff S. B. M. Young's lament of September 1903, that he was unable to do anything important because of the press of daily work, was also true for his successor fifteen years later.⁹⁷

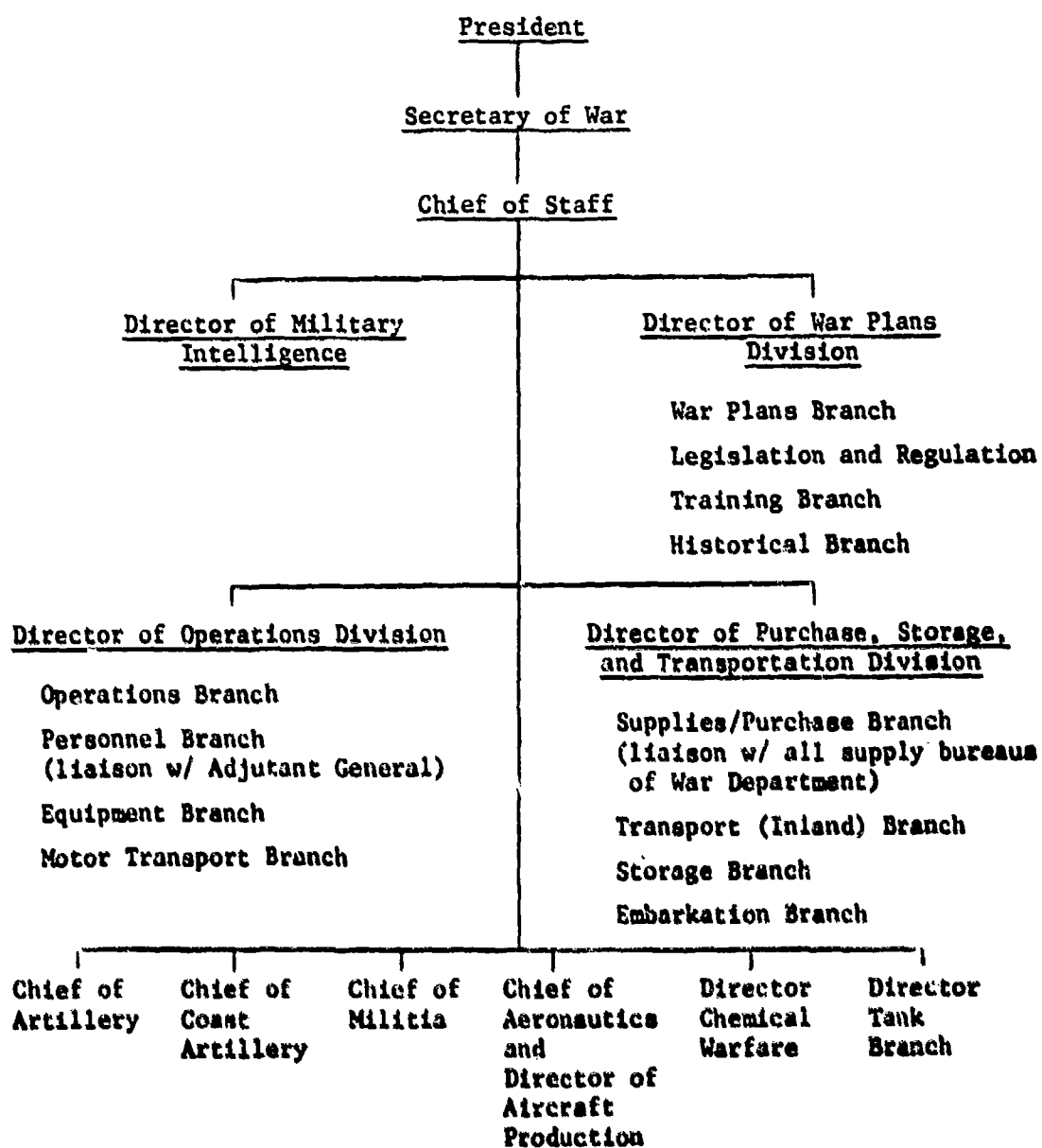
General Young's lament was never more accurate than in 1917. Feuding between the bureau chiefs, the chief of staff, the secretary of war, and the newly involved civilian industrialists resulted in the near collapse of the American military administration during the winter of 1917/18. A major reorganization of the staff took place in the spring of 1918, and by the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, the

United States had its first completely effective general staff.

From the spring of 1917 to the early months of 1918, there was no central control of economic mobilization, no effective coordination of purchasing, storage, or transportation of material, and little planning for long-range operations.⁹⁸ The first AWC war plan, developed in early April, called for no troop deployment to Europe until 1.5 million men had been completely trained; the first American division was actually marching through Paris three months after the declaration of war.⁹⁹ To add to the totally unrealistic planning of the AWC and the near-total absence of any coordination or control, the post of chief of staff, between April 1917 and March 1918, was occupied by four different officers who moved in and out of the post some seven times in eleven months, thus effectively preventing any formulation of solutions to the problems plaguing the staff by a powerful chief of staff.¹⁰⁰ Despite an attempt to form a coordinating War Council in December 1917, and civilian attempts to control the economic mobilization of industries, the entire American military system was on the verge of administrative disintegration by January 1918.¹⁰¹

The economic and military crisis of the winter of 1917/18 was readily apparent to the American leadership. By March 1918, massive reorganizations of the War Department, of the general staff, and of the civilian economic coordinating agencies promised to solve most of the problems.¹⁰² The reorganization of the War Department brought a greatly expanded general staff into effective control of all War Department bureaus and full control over the operations and logistics of the American army (see table 8). A combination of sheer need, a legislative "blank check" for the executive branch, and the appointment of a

Table 8
United States War Department General Staff, August 26, 1918¹⁰³



"ruthless executive" to the office of chief of staff was responsible for these reorganizations.¹⁰⁴

The Overman Act of May 20, 1918 allowed the president to alter the structure of any branch of the executive government as the war made this necessary.¹⁰⁵ Chief of Staff Peyton C March took full advantage of this act and of the desperate situation of the War Department. By the early summer of 1918, the general staff under March had nearly full control of American military affairs; most of this control was exercised directly by the general staff; only a minor portion was exercised through the still-existent War Department bureaus. By November 1918 there were over one thousand general staff officers in Washington alone.¹⁰⁶

This reorganization was based on American industrial and business methods, on the experience of the general staff officers since 1903, on the new contacts with and observations of the French and British staff systems, and on March's experience with the German-inspired Japanese general staff during the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁰⁷ March removed all executive powers from the bureaus, renamed the assistant chiefs of staff directors, and assumed control over all American military systems through the newly created four directorates of the general staff (Operations, War Plans, Military Intelligence, and Logistics). He also created the first American general staff historical section. The only military affairs not controlled by March and the central general staff was the American Expeditionary Force in France under the command of Pershing.¹⁰⁸

Pershing had been given full and complete authority over the AEF from its inception. This authority extended to the creation of its own general staff system.¹⁰⁹ The AEF officers, many of whom were graduates of the Leavenworth schools, observed the French and British staffs in

action in London, Paris, and in the field; they then significantly altered the American staff system based on these observations. The AEF abandoned the traditional American reliance on a two-section staff with troops (as prescribed in the 1917 War Department Regulations), and they adopted a four-section staff for line units and a five-section staff for the AEF central general staff.¹¹⁰ The four sections for line staffs were G-1, Administration and Personnel; G-2, Intelligence; G-3, Operations and Plans; and G-4, Logistics. The fifth section at AEF Headquarters was the G-5, Training and Education (normally a G-3 responsibility in the French army, it was made a separate section in the AEF to control the extensive training requirements of the AEF in France). The four-section model was based on the French general staff system modified by lessons drawn from the British army and from the experiences of the American officers with the American general staff since 1903.¹¹¹

The AEF also established a staff college at Langres, France, to train American general staff and administrative staff officers; the Leavenworth schools had not yet produced enough officers to fill the necessary staff positions.¹¹² By November 1918, the Langres school had trained over two hundred officers for the AEF general staff and an additional three hundred officers for duty with the AEF general staff with troops.¹¹³ The situation in France was so different from the experience in America, that Pershing's chief of staff, James G. Harbord, said, "Little of the accomplishments of the general staff system between its organization in 1903, and the date of our entry into the World War, served either as an inspiration or a guide in facing the problems which confronted General Pershing and his untried Chief of Staff."¹¹⁴ The staff accepted by the AEF bore little resemblance in structure or method

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to the Prussian general staff or to the American general staff of 1903.

In 1921, the American army officially accepted the AEF general staff system as the basic organization for all American staffs.¹¹⁵ This acceptance of the French- and British-inspired AEF staff changed the basic model for the American general staff, a model which before 1921 (or 1918 for the AEF) was based on the Prussian Grosser Generalstab. By 1918, the United States Army had experienced sixteen years of general staff development; years marked initially by a strong desire to imitate the Prussian system, a desire that could not withstand the attacks against the general staff launched by an interfering Congress and by the self-interested bureau chiefs. By 1916, the American general staff, driven away from effective imitation of the Prussian staff by congressional and other attacks, had lost all touch with the military realities of its world. Only the near-disaster of the winter of 1917/18, and the reforms of Peyton C. March, established the importance of the general staff within the American military hierarchy.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Weigley, History, p. 330; Edgar F. Raines, Jr., "Major General J. Franklin Bell and Military Reform: The Chief of Staff Years, 1906-1910" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1976), p. 266.

2. James Hewes, "The United States General Staff 1900-1917," Military Affairs 38 (April 1974): 68.

3. Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 103, 497; Nelson, General Staff, p. 101.

4. Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 190-192; Nelson, General Staff, pp. 76-79; Pohl, "General Staff," p. 94.

5. U. S. War Department, General Staff, "History of the General Staff and Organization Charts" (typewritten manuscript, copy located in USAMHRC Library, dated 1920), charts for 1910 and 1911.

6. Jack C. Lane, Armed Progressive--General Leonard Wood (San Rafael, California: Presidio Press, 1978), pp. 156-166; Matloff, American Military History, pp. 349-350.

7. Weigley, History, p. 333.

8. Lane, Leonard Wood, pp. 168-172.

9. Hewes, "United States General Staff," p. 69; Weigley, History, pp. 331-332. In 1912, legislative action had reduced the general staff corps from forty-five to thirty-six officers, partly due to the influence of Ainsworth with powerful congressmen; Nelson, General Staff, p. 180.

10. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, pp. 196-199; Weigley, History, pp. 349-350.

11. U.S. Army General Order No. 68, May 26, 1911, paragraphs 1, 5 (hereafter cited as G.O. No. 68); Samuel B. M. Young, "Memorandum of Remarks of S. B. M. Young to Officers detailed for study in the First General Staff, May 11, 1903" (typewritten manuscript, copy available at USAMHRC Library, not dated), p. 1; Raines, "Military Reform," p. 100; Huntington, Soldier and State, p. 144.

12. Nelson, General Staff, p. 180.

13. Examples of this are found in Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 159-163.

14. Pohl, "General Staff," chapters 3-4; Huntington, Soldier and State, pp. 146-147.

15. See above, pp. 12-13; G.O. No. 68, paragraph 3.

16. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, p. 218; U.S. War Department, General Staff, "History of the General Staff," chart dated June 22, 1916.

17. Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 147-152; Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, p. 219.

18. Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 148-149; Nelson, General Staff, p. 178.

19. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, pp. 218-220; Nelson, General Staff, p. 179.

20. The Quartermaster General's Office had a uniformed strength of 5,400 in 1916; Weigley, History, pp. 364, 378.

21. Nelson, General Staff, p. 180.

22. Ray S. Cline, Washington Command Post: The Operations Division (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1951), p. 17.

23. Richard D. Challener, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy 1898-1914 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 47-48; J. A. S. Grenville, "Diplomacy and War Plans in the United States, 1890-1917," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 11 (1961): 10, 12-14.

24. Memorandum from Naval War College to Tasker H. Bliss, October 21, 1904, Tasker H. Bliss Papers, USAMHRC; Grenville, "Diplomacy and War Plans," pp. 14-18.

25. Challener, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, pp. 29-32; Holger F. Herwig and David F. Trask, "Naval Operations Plans between Germany and the USA 1898-1913: A Study of Strategic Planning in the Age of Imperialism," Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen 7, no. 2 (1970): 31.

26. Grenville, "Diplomacy and War Plans," p. 9.

27. Allan R. Millett, The General: Robert L. Bullard and Officer-ship in the United States Army, 1881-1925 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 232.

28. William D. Connor, "Organization and Duties of the Staff--a Lecture in the Course on Organization and Tactics delivered November 22, 1904 at the U.S. Army Infantry and Cavalry School" (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Army Service Schools Press, 1904), p. 30. William Connor later became the G-4 (Logistics) officer for the AEF; James G. Harbord, "A of Staff in the Theater of Operations--Address delivered at the Army War

College, Washington, D.C., April 6, 1939" (Washington, D.C.: War College Press, 1939), p. 28.

29. G.O. No. 68, paragraphs 17 and 18.

30. Ibid., paragraph 18; Elihu Root to Theodore Schwan, July 8, 1903, Root Papers; Knötel, Knötel, and Sieg, Uniforms of the World, pp. 441-442.

31. Edward M. Coffman, The Hilt of the Sword: The Career of Peyton C. March (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 61; Nelson, General Staff, pp. 102, 175.

32. Theodore Schwan, "Address before the General Staff, May 12, 1903--Intended for Limited Distribution Only and not for Publication" (typewritten manuscript, copy available in Root Papers, not dated), p. 29.

33. Young, "Memorandum of Remarks," p. 1.

34. See, for example, William H. Carter, "Is the Present System of Detail to Staff Department Conducive to the Discipline and Efficiency of the Army? Should it be revised?" JMSIUS 49 (July/August 1911): 15-34, and George H. Shelton, "Is the Present System of Detail to Staff Departments Conducive to the Discipline and Efficiency of the Army? Should it be revised?" JMSIUS 49 (July/August 1911): 1-14. The essays were the winners of the 1911 JMSIUS essay writing contest.

35. Schwan, "Address," p. 29.

36. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

37. Shelton, "Detail System," pp. 2-3.

38. Prussian officers, both active and reserve, were trained for their wartime positions by making their war and peace duties practically identical, as far as possible. The American army could not do this.

39. Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, chapters 1-4.

40. Quoted in Hunt, History of Fort Leavenworth, p. 184.

41. Tasker H. Bliss, "Report of Tasker H. Bliss, U.S. Army, President of the Army War College" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), pp. 4-9.

42. U.S. Army Service Schools, Annual Report for 1908 (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Service Schools Press, 1908), pp. 8-9; Ira L. Reeves, Military Education in the United States (Burlington: Free Press Printing, 1914), pp. 213-215.

43. Reeves, Military Education, pp. 213-214.

44. U.S. Army Service Schools, Annual Reports 1903-1917 (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Army Service Schools Press, 1903-1917); Reeves, Military Education, p. 218.

45. Reeves, Military Education, p. 219.

46. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 60-61. The 1907/8 class began with forty-two students; two were removed from the class for physical disability, one National Guard officer was forced to leave the school when his unit was disbanded, the remaining thirty-nine all graduated; U.S. Army Service Schools, Annual Report for 1908, pp. 10-11.

47. U.S. Army Service Schools, Annual Reports 1903-1917; Weigley, History, pp. 325-326.

48. See above pp. 16-20 for the Kriegsakademie system.

49. See above pp. 55-56 for Wagner at Leavenworth.

50. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 3-9; Eben Swift, "An American Pioneer in the Cause of Military Education," JMSIUS 44 (January/February 1909): 69-70.

51. Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, pp. 3, 8-9.

52. U.S. Infantry and Cavalry School, Annual Report for 1907 (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Service Schools Press, 1907), p. 39; J. Franklin Bell, "Reflections and Suggestions--Address delivered to Staff and Students of Fort Leavenworth, March 17, 1906" (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Service Schools Press, 1906), p. 2; Weigley, History, pp. 325-326. J. Franklin Bell was the commandant of Leavenworth from 1903 to 1906; he referred to "our friend Griepenkerl" in the above address to the staff and students of the Leavenworth schools.

53. U.S. Army Staff College, Annual Report for 1907 (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Service Schools Press, 1907), p. 97.

54. Ibid.; U.S. Army Staff College, Annual Report for 1908 (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Service Schools Press, 1908), p. 63; Connor, "Lecture," p. 1.

55. Connor, "Lecture," pp. 1-2.

56. U.S. Infantry and Cavalry School, Annual Report for 1907, p. 39.

57. Reeves, Military Education, p. 219.

58. U.S. Infantry and Cavalry School, Annual Report for 1907, pp. 47-48.

59. Farrand L. Sayre, Map Maneuvers (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Staff College Press, 1908), p. iv; Joseph P. Wissner to Farrand Sayre,

February 17, 1908, Document Nr. 3755-35 MID, Record Group 165, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Infantry and Cavalry School, Annual Report for 1907, p. 49.

60. Sayre, Map Maneuvers, pp. 40-43, 54-59.

61. Two officers were also selected annually from the honor and distinguished graduates of the U.S. Army Engineer School; Reeves, Military Education, pp. 220-221.

62. Ibid., p. 220.

63. U.S. Army Staff College, Annual Reports 1903-1910 (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Service Schools Press, 1903-1910).

64. Reeves, Military Education, pp. 222-223.

65. Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 354-366.

66. Elihu Root, "Address at the Dedication of the Army War College Building, November 9, 1908," in Bacon, Military and Colonial Policy, p. 128.

67. Bliss, "Report of President of Army War College," pp. 4-9.

68. Raines, "Military Reform," p. 227.

69. Reeves, Military Education, p. 201.

70. "Instructions Relative to the Conduct of the Examination for Admission to the Army War College in 1917," f/w 311224, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

71. U.S. War Department, Bulletin No. 9, March 23, 1914.

72. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff--Subject; Selection of Officers for Detail at the Army War College, November 3, 1914, f/w 311224, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

73. Reeves, Military Education, p. 201. Political pull was used on occasion to gain admission to the AWC; for an example of the successful use of political influence by a prospective student, see Millett, The General, pp. 221-223.

74. Ahern, Chronicle of the Army War College, pp. 78, 125-132.

75. Millett, The General, pp. 224-232.

76. Documents numbered 4453-B-6, 4453-B-7, 4453-B-13, and others, Box 10, MID, Record Group 165, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

77. Millett, The General, p. 230; Ahern, Chronicle of the Army War College, pp. 78, 136-137; Reeves, Military Education, p. 202.

78. Millett, The General, p. 224; Reeves, Military Education, p. 202; Ahern, Chronicle of the Army War College, p. 128.

79. U.S. War Department, Staff Manual 1917 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), pp. 9-12.

80. G.O. No. 68, paragraph 3.

81. Pohl, "General Staff," p. 93; Weigley, History, p. 353.

82. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, p. 216.

83. Reeves, Military Education, p. 200.

84. Grenville, "Diplomacy and War Plans," pp. 12-18; Challener, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, pp. 29-44; Weigley, History, p. 353.

85. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, pp. 182-183, 190.

86. Powe, Intelligence Agency, pp. 66-76; Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, 189; Tasker H. Bliss, "Mobilization and Maneuvers," JMSIUS 50 (March/April 1912): 182-187; Nelson, General Staff, p. 101.

87. Challener, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, p. 401; Powe, Intelligence Agency, p. 65; Nelson, General Staff, pp. 82-99.

88. Challener, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, p. 405.

89. Grenville, "Diplomacy and War Plans," p. 20.

90. Powe, Intelligence Agency, p. 54; Raines, "Military Reform," pp. 228-230; Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, pp. 192-193.

91. Weigley, History, pp. 348-350.

92. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, p. 216.

93. Ibid., p. 178.

94. Raines, "Military Reform," p. 230.

95. Bliss, "Report of the President of the Army War College," p. 10.

96. Powe, Intelligence Agency, p. 76.

97. S. B. M. Young to General J. G. Ballance, September 2, 1903, Young Papers, USAMHRC; Weigley, History, p. 350.

98. Ross H. McLean, "Troop Movements on the American Railroads during the Great War," American Historical Review 26 (April 1921): 464; Hewes, Root to McNamara, pp. 25-26; Frederic L. Paxson, "The American War Government, 1917-1918," American Historical Review 26 (October 1920): 54-76.

99. Weigley, History, p. 356; Edward M. Coffman, "The Battle against Red Tape: Business Methods in the War Department General Staff, 1917-1918," Military Affairs 26 (Spring 1962): 2.

100. Weigley, History, p. 379; Coffman, "Red Tape," pp. 1-2.

101. McLean, "Troop Movements," pp. 467-470; Weigley, History, p. 367.

102. Coffman, "Red Tape," pp. 4-9; Cline, Washington Command Post, p. 18.

103. Kreidberg, Military Mobilization, p. 46; U.S. War Department, General Staff, "History of the General Staff," chart no. 7.

104. Hewes, Root to McNamara, pp. 30-39.

105. Ibid., p. 41; Joseph Mills Hanson, "The Historical Section, Army War College," Military Affairs 1 (Spring 1937): 70-72; Weigley, History, p. 380.

106. Weigley, History, p. 380.

107. Ibid., p. 379; McLean, "Troop Movements," p. 470; Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, pp. 52-53.

108. Weigley, History, p. 380; Hanson, "Historical Section," pp. 70-74.

109. Harbord, "Chief of Staff," pp. 16-17.

110. Ibid., pp. 20-23; Hunter Liggett, Commanding an American Army: Recollections of the World War (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1925), pp. 18-22, 24; James G. Harbord, America in the World War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933), pp. 31-32; Nenninger, Leavenworth Schools, chapters 7 and 8.

111. Hittle, Military Staffs, p. 189; Nelson, General Staff, pp. 259-260.

112. Weigley, History, p. 387.

113. Hittle, Military Staffs, p. 190; Harbord, America in the World War, p. 8.

114. Harbord, "Chief of Staff," pp. 6-7.

115. Ibid., p. 23; Hewes, Root to McNamara, p. 50.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Any analysis of the cross-cultural transfer of ideas must begin with an examination of the borrowing culture's awareness of the model. After this familiarity has been established, the strength, or weakness, of the imitation can be assessed. This chapter begins with a discussion of the American knowledge of the Prussian staff and then examines the use of this model by American military reformers. Analysis of the innovation and adaptation which characterized the development of the American general staff from 1903 to 1918 concludes this chapter.

Some officers of the American army learned the importance of a general staff from the Prussian victory over France in 1870/71. For the next three decades, these officers attempted, with little success, to reform the American army administration on the Prussian model. The knowledge of the Prussian staff came primarily from Upton's books, through the periodic visits of officers to Europe, and from the publications of the Military Information Division. The creation of a military attaché system by 1890, and the publication of Schwan's Report on the Organization of the German Army, Wilkinson's The Brain of an Army, and the MID's Staffs of Various Armies, made current and accurate information on the Prussian staff system available to all American army officers.

This information was used to suit different ends. Some officers,

like General Nelson A. Miles, denied that any possible value for the American army could be gained from knowledge of the Prussian army. Other officers, notably Tasker Bliss and Arthur Wagner, used this readily available information to propose, and inaugurate, reforms of the officer education system. Until Elihu Root became secretary of war in 1899, however, there was no effective leadership for broad reforms of the American military administration based on the Prussian model; additionally, the Spanish-American War, and its disastrous mismanagement by the American government, gave an added impetus to the reform movement. The shame of this "splendid little war" made the majority of American army officers aware of the need for military reform for the first time.

When Root came into office in 1899, he quickly became familiar with the works of Emory Upton, Theodore Schwan, Arthur Wagner, and the MID. By 1901, Root had also been advised by William Ludlow on the results of Ludlow's successful trip to Europe and Germany, and of Joseph Sanger's abortive trip to London; Root was also influenced by William Carter's desires for an adequate American postgraduate officer education system. Root's knowledge of the Prussian system, which his advisors often referred to as the most efficient military machine in the world, and his awareness of the grossly inefficient American War Department, led Root to accept the Prussian general staff and officer education systems as the basic sources for his proposals of reform. Root's implementation of these proposals varied from direct imitation of the Prussian system to conscious innovation of new institutions and techniques to suit the American military needs at the turn of this century.

The first step Root took towards reforming the American army administration was the creation of the Army War College as an interim

general staff. No such organization or institution existed in the Prussian army, nor had any of the American observers of the Prussian system reported that such a system ever existed. The AWC was not intended as a copy of the Prussian Kriegsakademie; its function was to be the planning board of the American general staff, not a training school for general staff officers. It fulfilled its planning function, with very limited results, from 1902 to 1917, but after the creation of the American general staff corps in 1903, the AWC gradually became less a planning agency, and more an educational institution.

Root was also instrumental, through the actions of William H. Carter, in the reestablishment and standardization of the United States Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth (the School of the Line and the Staff College). These schools were the primary postgraduate officer institutions after 1902; they were also the American army institutions which, through Root and Carter, borrowed the most from the Prussian military. Although the courses of study, the methods of instruction, and the texts used by these schools were often duplicates of those in use at the Kriegsakademie, the schools in the American army served a different purpose than the Prussian schools. The American army, limited by congressional restrictions on funding and personnel strengths to some 100,000 men, had to prepare its officers for leadership and staff positions in a wartime army of several million men. The need to educate as many officers as possible for an expandable army, and not just train the best officers for general staff duty, forced the officers of the American general staff to create a system of officer selection, education, and utilization which was an American innovation, not an adaptation or an imitation of the Prussian system.

Within this different educational purpose, the Leavenworth schools did imitate the system of instruction used by the Prussian officer education system. Direct communication between Leavenworth and the American military attachés in Europe insured that the most up-to-date information on the Prussian staff officer education was always available; many of the instructors at Leavenworth were in personal communication with the American attachés in Berlin throughout the period from 1890 to 1917. Especially influential in the development of the Leavenworth schools in partial imitation of the Prussian system was the work of Arthur L. Wagner. His contacts with the American attaché in Berlin, Robert K. Evans, were enhanced by their personal friendship; Wagner was the primary motivation for the acceptance by the American postgraduate officer schools of the techniques of instruction as practiced in Berlin.

The American general staff itself was designed to function in a manner similar to that of the Prussian general staff. The American concerns for war planning, intelligence gather and analysis, supervision of officer education, and coordination of all military matters were all in direct imitation of the missions of the Prussian general staff. This was admitted frequently by Root, Bliss, Young, Schwan, and other influential American military leaders from 1890 to 1917. The reality of the American general staff from 1903 to 1917, and especially during its "nadir" of 1916, was that of an ineffective and powerless institution. Its purpose was imitated from the Prussian general staff; its ineffectiveness was an American innovation.

Although the idea of an American general staff and the techniques of officer education were imitated from the Prussian general staff, the American staff system functioned in a different civil-military system

than the Prussian Grosser Generalstab. Perhaps the most significant difference between the two systems was the method of control of the military in the two countries. Instead of the Prussian system of owing allegiance to a king, and instead of being commanded by military men in both peace and war, the American general staff was under complete civilian domination. This civilian control of the military was exercised through the command of the military by a civilian president and secretary of war, and through the restrictions placed on the army by Congress. Emory Upton had recommended reforms of this civilian control along the lines of the Prussian military control, but such reforms were impossible under the provisions of the American Constitution, as well as being practically impossible in a nation which prided itself on the concept of civil control of the military.

The serious problems of public apathy, congressional interference, insufficient personnel, and most significantly, insufficient time and need to develop an effective staff prevented the American general staff from fulfilling its designed function as the American army's central coordinating and planning organization. The early years of the American general staff were characterized by an innovative approach to army-navy cooperation (a matter the Prussian general staff was never able to accomplish) and its effective planning for, and execution of, the 1906 Cuban occupation. These activities, and the progress made within the officer education system for an expandable army, proved that the American general staff officers could learn from the Prussian system, adapt these lessons to the American situation, and then progress beyond the limitations of the Prussian staff. The best example of this is the activity of Arthur Wagner at the Leavenworth schools, and then during his years

as chief of the MID. Wagner, like other officers, acquired a knowledge of the Prussian system from both firsthand experience and extensive reading; his actions at Leavenworth and in the MID reflect his knowledge, and his eagerness to adopt the Prussian system to the American needs.

The statue of Frederick the Great which was dedicated with extensive ceremony and prolix speeches in the fall of 1904 is an evocative symbol of the American general staff's use of the Prussian model. The statue, dedicated on the front steps of the new Army War College Building to provide "an incentive to effort" for the American general staff officers, was nearly destroyed two months after its dedication. According to the official report, the statue in January 1905 was

located upon the unfinished terrace of the War College Building under construction and [was] surrounded by a tall picket fence surmounted by several strands of barbed wire to prevent the approach to it by malicious persons who might attempt to do injury to it. About 12 noon on the 10th [of January 1905] a man alighted from a cab in the vicinity of the statue, hurried towards it, and attached to the fence in the rear of it a hand bag or carrying case. He then rapidly drove away. His actions were noticed by several persons as was also the fact that smoke was issuing from the package that he hung on the fence. . . . One of the civilian employees engaged on the War College Building also noticed the package and removed it from the fence, throwing it upon the ground some distance from the statue where it exploded very shortly afterwards. No damage resulted to the statue. . . . The package apparently contained a small charge, variously estimated at from one to three or four pounds of explosive, generally believed to be dynamite.¹

The statue was then guarded day and night until the building was completed. During World War I, the statue was removed from the War College grounds and placed in storage. It remained out of public view until some two decades after the Second World War when it was relocated, and rededicated, at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, the current site of the

Army War College.² The statue of Frederick, and the idea for an American general staff, both came from Prussia.

Cultures both borrow from other cultures and innovate, or create, their own solutions to problems. The American creation of a general staff system was initially based on reports from official observers of the Prussian staff. Faced with problems different from those faced by the Prussian army, the United States Army began to adapt the Prussian staff to American needs in the years after 1903. American army officers also began to create pragmatic solutions to the unique American problems, solutions which were not imitative or adaptive but which were innovative. The American general staff was a combination of imitation and adaptation of the Prussian general staff and the use of innovation by the American officers.

The clearest aspects of the American general staff as imitation of the Prussian system are the imitation of the techniques of instruction at Leavenworth, and to a lesser extent, at the Army War College. The organization of the American staff, with its use of a military intelligence section and sections responsible for planning and coordination, also can be explained as imitation of the Prussian staff. The imitation of officer education methods from the Prussian Kriegsakademie was a success; the imitation or attempted imitation of the Prussian general staff organization was not. The American staff organization, caught between congressional interference and the lack of sufficient personnel, failed to imitate the routine effectiveness of the Prussian staff (with the exception of the 1906 Cuban occupation) and failed to match, through imitation, the flexibility of the Prussian staff organization.

More examples of adaptation of the Prussian system are found from

1903 to 1918 than examples of imitation. The foundation of the AWC as an interim general staff, while not based on any Prussian institution, was Elihu Root's attempt to adapt the Prussian Grosser Generalstab to the American army without requiring congressional approval. The utilization of the AWC after the 1903 creation of the general staff is also an example of adaptation: the college, founded to be a general staff itself, was altered in an unsuccessful attempt to create an American Kriegsakademie. This adaptation of a Prussian system was almost a total failure. The Leavenworth schools were a much more efficient adaptation of the Prussian general staff system by the American army. Perhaps the most obvious example of adaptation for the United States general staff was its attempted fulfillment of its mission to prepare for war in time of peace. Borrowed originally by Root from Bronsart von Schellendorf, this idea was gradually altered by successive chiefs of staff and secretaries of war to meet the specific needs of the American army.

Innovation by 1917 was the overriding consideration in the United States Army. The failure of imitation (with the important exception of the Leavenworth instruction system) and the failure of adaptation to provide a functioning and effective general staff for the United States became painfully obvious in the winter of 1917/18. Several aspects of the American general staff system had been created through innovation prior to 1917/18 (notably the use of officer training and selection to prepare for the expandable army concept), but it was not until the disastrous events at the end of 1917 that imitation and adaptation were generally abandoned as feasible alternatives to innovation. The attempts at imitation from 1903 to 1917, like many of the attempts at adaptation, failed due to the problems of congressional interference, public apathy,

and the absence of a plausible threat to American national security.

On the eve of American entry into the Great War, the American general staff was an ineffective combination of imitation and adaptation of the Prussian general staff and of American innovation. Several successes, notably the Leavenworth schools, had resulted from imitation or adaptation of the Prussian Grosser Generalstab, but the severe problems affecting the American army as a whole prevented, before the crisis of the winter of 1917/18, the formation of an effective American general staff. Without the existence of an obvious threat to national security and without the example of contemporary military disasters, the American army after 1903 could not imitate, adapt, or innovate an effective general staff. Motivated by the near-disasters of 1917/18, the American army formed an effective general staff system, a system based, in part, on the earlier imitation and adaptation of the Prussian general staff, but with its new organization based on innovative solutions to the American situation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Major Beach to Adjutant General, Department of the East, January 12, 1905, Document Nr. 475037, Adjutant General's Office Correspondence and Despatches, Old Military Records Division Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

2. Ibid.; interview with George J. Stansfield, librarian, National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., May 15, 1980.

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